

JACK HINTON,

THE
GUARDSMAN.

BY
CHARLES LEVER.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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JACK HINTON

CHARLES J. E. H.

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was emptied to its last drop, and the kettle lay pensively on one side, like some shipwrecked craft, high and dry upon the shore. I looked at my watch; it was but four o'clock. Our meeting was appointed for half-past five; so I crept noiselessly back to my room, not sorry to have half-an-hour to myself of undisturbed reflection. When I had finished my dressing, I threw up the sash and sprang out into the garden. It was a wild, uncultivated spot, but still there was something of beauty in those old trees whose rich blossoms scented the air, while the rank weeds of many a gay and gaudy hue shot up luxuriantly about their trunks — the pink marsh-mallow and the taper fox-glove mingling their colours with the sprayey meadow-sweet and the wild sweet-brier. There was an air of solitude in the neglect around me that seemed to suit the habit of my soul; and I strolled along from one walk to another, lost in my own thoughts.

There were many things at a moment like that, I would fain have written — fain have said; but so it is, in the wealth of our emotions we can give nothing; and I could not bring myself to write to my friends, even to say farewell. Although I felt that in every stage of this proceeding I had nothing to reproach myself with, this duel being thrust on me by one who had singled me out for his hatred, yet I saw, as its result, nothing but the wreck of all my hopes. Already had *she* intimated how strong was her father's attachment to his nephew, and with an expressive fear cautioned me against any collision with him. How vain are all our efforts, how fruitless are all our endeavours to struggle against the current of our fate! We may stem for a short time the full tide of fortune — we may

breast, with courage high and spirit fierce, the rough billows as they break upon us, but we are certain to succumb in the end. With some men failure is a question of fear — some want the persevering courage to drag on amid trials and difficulties — and some are deficient in the temper which, subduing our actions to a law, governs and presides over every moment of our lives, rendering us, even in our periods of excitement and irritation, amenable to the guidance of our reason.

This was my case; and I felt that, notwithstanding all my wishes to avoid a quarrel with Burke, yet in my heart a lurking spirit urged me to seek him out and offer him defiance. While these thoughts were passing through my mind, I suddenly heard a voice which somehow seemed half familiar to my ear. I listened: it came from a room of which the window was partly open. I now remembered that poor Joe lay in that part of the house, and the next moment I knew it to be his. Placing a ladder against the wall, I crept quietly up till I could peep into the room. The poor fellow was alone — sitting up in his bed, with his hunting-cap on, an old whip in his hand, which he flourished from time to time with no small energy; his cheek was flushed; and his eye, prominent and flashing, denoted the access of high fever. It was evident that his faculties, clouded as they were even in their happiest moments, were now under the wilder influence of delirium. He was speaking rapidly to himself in a quick under tone, calling the dogs by name, caressing this one, scolding that; and then, bursting forth into a loud tally-ho! his face glowed with an ecstatic pleasure, and he broke forth into a rude chant, the words of which I have never forgotten, for as he sung them in

a voice of wild and touching sweetness, they seemed the very outpourings of his poor simple heart.

"I never yet owned a horse or hound,
I never was lord of a foot of ground;
Yet few are richer, I will be bound,
Than me of a hunting morning.

"I'm far better off nor him that pays,
For though I've no money, I live at my ease,
With hunting and shooting whenever I please,
And a tally-high-ho in the morning.

"As I go on foot, I don't loose my sate,
As I take the gaps, I don't brake a gate;
And if I'm not first, why I'm seldom late,
With my tally-high-ho in the morning.

"And there's not a man, be he high or low,
In the parts down here, or wherever you go,
That doesn't like poor Tipperary Joe,
With his tally-high-ho in the morning."

A loud view holloa followed this wild chant, and then the poor fellow, as if exhausted by his efforts, sank back in the bed, muttering to himself, in a low broken voice, but with a look so happy, and a smile so tranquil, he seemed more a thing to envy, than one to commiserate and pity.

"I say, Hinton," shouted the major from the window of my bed-room, "what the deuce are you doing up that ladder there? not serenading Mrs. Doolan, I hope. Are you aware it is five o'clock?"

I descended with all haste, and joining my friend, took his arm, and set out towards the *rendezvous*.

"I didn't order the horses," said Mahon, "for the rumour of such a thing as this always gets abroad through one's servants."

"Ah, yes," said I, "and then you have the police."

"The police!" repeated he, laughing; "not a bit of

it, my boy: don't forget you're in glorious old Ireland, where no one ever thinks of spoiling a fair fight. It is possible the magistrate might issue his warrant if you would not come up to time, but for any thing else —"

"Well," said I, "that certainly does afford me another glimpse of your habits. How far have we to go, major?"

"You remember the grass field below the sunk fence, to the left of the mill?"

"Where the stream runs?"

"Exactly, that's the spot. It was old Pigott chose it, and no man is a better judge of these things. By-the-bye, it is very lucky that Burke should have pitched upon a gentleman for his friend — I mean a real gentleman, — for there are plenty of his acquaintances, who, under that name, would rob the mail."

Thus chatting as we went, Mahon informed me that Pigott was an old half-pay colonel, whose principal occupation for thirteen years had been what the French would call "*to assist*" at affairs of honour. Even the major himself looked up to him as a last appeal in a disputed or a difficult point; and many a reserved case was kept for his opinion, with the same ceremonious observance as a knotty point of law for the consideration of the twelve judges. Crossing the little rivulet near the mill, we held on by a small by-path which brought us over the starting ground of the steeplechase, by the scene of part of my preceding days' exploits. While I was examining with some curiosity the ground cut up and trod by the horses' feet, and looking at the spot where he had taken the fence, the sharp sound of two pistol-shots quickly aroused me, and I eagerly asked what it was.

“Snapping the pistols,” said Mahon. “Ah, by-the-bye, all this kind of thing is new to you: never mind; put a careless, half indifferent kind of face on the matter. Do you take snuff? It doesn’t signify; put your hands in your pockets, and hum ‘Tatter Jack Walsh!’”

As I supposed there was no specific charm in the melody he alluded to, nor if there had been, had I any time to acquire it, I consoled myself by observing the first part of his direction, and strolled after him into the field, with a *nonchalance* only perhaps a little too perfect.

Mr. Burke and his friends, to the number of about a dozen persons, were already assembled; and were one to judge from their loud talking and hearty laughter as we came forward, it would seem difficult to believe the occasion that brought them there; so, at least, I thought. Not so, however, the major; for, with a hop, step, and a jump, performed by about the shortest pair of legs in the barony, he sprang into the midst of the party, with some droll observation on the benefits of early rising, which once more called forth their merriment. Seating myself on a large moss-covered stone, I waited patiently for the preliminaries to be settled. As I threw my eye among the group, I perceived that Burke was not there; but on turning my head, I remarked two men walking arm-in-arm on the opposite side of the hedge. As they paced to and fro, I could see, by the violence of his gesticulations, and the energy of his manner, that one was Burke. It seemed as though his companion was endeavouring to reason with, and dissuade him from some course of proceeding he appeared bent on following; but there was a savage

earnestness in his manner that would not admit of persuasion; and at last, as if wearied and vexed by his friend's importunities, he broke rudely from him, and springing over the fence, called out, "Pigott, are you aware it is past six?" Then pulling out his watch, he added, "I must be at Ballinasloe by eleven o'clock."

"If you speak another word, Sir," said the old colonel, with an air of offended dignity, "I leave the ground. — Major Mahon, a word if you please."

They walked apart from the rest for a few seconds, and then the colonel, throwing his glove upon the grass, proceeded to step off the ground with a military precision and formality, that I am sure, at any other time, would have highly amused me.

After a slight demur from the major, to which I could perceive the colonel readily yielded, a walking-stick was stuck at either end of the measured distance, while the two seconds, placing themselves beside them, looked at each other with very great satisfaction, and mutually agreed it was a sweet spot.

"Would you like to look at these?" said Pigott, taking up the pistols from where they lay on the grass.

"Ah, I know them well," replied the major, laughing; "these were poor Tom Casey's, and a better fellow, and a handier with his iron, never snapped a trigger. These are ours, colonel;" presenting, as he spoke, two splendid-looking Mortimers, in all the brilliancy of their maiden freshness. A look of contempt from the colonel, and a most expressive shrug of his shoulders, was his reply.

"Begad, I think so," said Mahon, as if appreciating the gesture; "I had rather have that old tool with

the cracked stock — not but this is a very sweet instrument and elegantly balanced in the hand.”

“We are ready now,” said Pigott: “bring up your man, major.”

As I started up to obey the summons, a slight bustle near attracted me. Two or three of Burke’s friends were endeavouring as it were to pacify and subdue him; but his passion knew no bounds, and as he broke from them, he said in a voice perfectly audible where I stood, “Won’t I, by G—; then I’ll tell you, if I don’t shoot him —”

“Sir,” said the colonel, turning on him a look of passionate indignation, “if it were not that you were here to answer the appeal of wounded honour, I’d leave you to your fate this moment; as it is, another such expression as that you’ve used, and I abandon you on the spot.”

Doggedly and without speaking, Burke drew his hat far down upon his eyes, and took the place marked out for him.

“Mr. Hinton,” said the colonel, as he touched his hat with most courteous politeness, “will you have the goodness to stand there.”

Mahon, meanwhile, handed each man his pistol, and, whispering in my ear “aim low,” retired.

“The word, gentlemen,” said the colonel, “will be, one, two, three. Mr. Hinton, pray observe, I beg of you, you’ll not reserve your fire after I say three.” With his eyes fixed upon us, he walked back about ten paces. “Are you ready — are you both ready?”

“Yes, yes,” said Burke, impatiently.

“Yes,” said I.

“One, two, three.”

I lifted my pistol at the second word, and as the last dropped from the colonel's lips, one loud report rang through the air, and both pistols went off together. A quick, sharp pang shot through my cheek, as though it had been seared by a hot instrument. I put up my hand, but the ball had only touched the flesh, and a few drops of blood were all the damage. Not so Burke; my ball had entered above the hip, and already his trowsers were stained with blood, and notwithstanding his endeavours, he could not stand up straight.

"Is he hit, Pigott?" cried he, in a voice harsh from agony. "Is he hit, I say?"

"Only grazed," said I, tranquilly, as I wiped the stain from my face.

"Another pistol quick. Do you hear me, Pigott?"

"We are not the arbiters in this case," replied the colonel coolly. "Major Mahon, is your friend satisfied?"

"Perfectly satisfied on our own account," said the major; "but if the gentleman desires another shot —"

"I do, I do," screamed Burke, as, writhing with pain, he pressed both hands to his side, from which the blood, now gushing in torrents, formed a pool about his feet. "Be quick there, Pigott, I am getting faint." He staggered forward as he spoke, his face pale and his lips parted; then, suddenly clutching his pistol by the barrel, he fixed his eyes steadily on me, while with a curse he hurled the weapon at my head, and fell senseless to the earth. His aim was true, for straight between the eyes the weapon struck me, and felled me to the ground. Although stunned for the moment, I could hear the cry of horror and indignant

shame that broke from the by-standers; but the next instant a dreamy confusion came over me, and I became unconscious of what was passing around.

CHAPTER II.

A country doctor.

SHOULD my reader feel any interest concerning that portion of my history which immediately followed the events of my last chapter, I believe I must refer him to Mrs. Doolan, the amiable hostess of the Bonaveen Arms. She could probably satisfy any curious inquiry as to the confusion produced in her establishment by the lively sallies of Tipperary Joe in one quarter, and the more riotous madness of myself in another. The fact is, good reader, my head was an English one; and although its contents were gradually acclimating themselves to the habits of the country, the external shell had not assumed that proper thickness and due power of resistance which Irish heads would appear to be gifted with. In plain words, the injury had brought on delirium.

It was somewhere in the third week after this unlucky morning, that I found myself lying in my bed, with a wet cloth upon my temples; while over my whole frame was spread that depressing sense of great debility, more difficult to bear than acute bodily suffering. Although unable to speak, I could distinctly hear the conversation about me, and recognise the voices of both Father Tom and the major as they conversed with a third party, whom I afterwards learned was the Galen of Loughrea. Dr. Mopin, surgeon of the Roscommon militia, had been for forty years the terror of the sick of the surrounding country; for, in-

dependent of a naturally harsh and disagreeable manner, he had a certain slang and sneering way of addressing his patients, that was perfectly shocking. Amusing himself the while at their expense, by suggesting the various unhappy and miserable consequences that might follow on their illness, he appeared to take a diabolical pleasure in the terror he was capable of eliciting.

There was something almost amusing in the infernal ingenuity he had acquired in this species of torture. There was no stage of your illness, no phase of your constitution, no character, no condition of your malady, that was not the immediate forerunner of one or more afflicting calamities. Were you getting weaker, it was the way they always died out; did you gain strength, it was a rally before death; were you despondent, it was best for you to know your state; were you sanguine, he would rebuke your good spirits, and suggest the propriety of a priest. However, with all these qualifications people put up with him, and as he had a certain kind of rude skill, and never stuck at a bold method, he obtained the best practice of the country, and a wide-spread reputation.

"Well," said Father Tom, in a low voice — "well, doctor, what do you think of him this evening?"

"What do I think of him? Just what I thought before — congestion of the membranes. This is the low stage he is in now: I wouldn't be surprised if he'd get a little better in a few days, and then go off like the rest of them."

"Go off! eh? now you don't mean —?"

"Don't I? — May be not. The ould story, coma, convulsions, and death."

"Damn the fellow," said the major, in a muttered

voice, "I feel as if I was in a well. But I say, doctor, what are we to do?"

"Any thing you please; they say his family is mighty respectable, and have plenty of money; I hope so; for here am I coming three times a day, and may be when he dies it will be a mourning ring they'll be sending me instead of my fee. He was a dissipated chap I am sure: look at the circles under his eyes!"

"Ay, ay," said the priest, "but they only came since his illness."

"So much the worse," added the invincible doctor, "that's always a symptom that the base of the brain is attacked."

"And what happens then?" said the major.

"Oh he might recover; I knew a man once get over it, and he is alive now, and in Swift's Hospital."

"Mad?" said the priest.

"Mad as a March hare," grinned the doctor; "he thinks himself the post-office clock, and chimes all the hours and half-hours day and night."

"The heavens be about us!" said Father Tom, crossing himself piously: "I had rather be dead than that."

"When did you see Burke?" inquired the major, wishing to change the conversation.

"About an hour ago; he is going fast!"

"Why I thought he was better," said Father Tom; "they told me he eat a bit of chicken, and took a little wine and water."

"Ay, so he did; I bid them give him whatever he liked, as his time was so short: so, after all, maybe it is as well for this young chap here not to get over it."

"How so?" said the major; "what do you mean by that?"

"Just that it is as good to die of a brain fever as be hanged, and it won't shock the family."

"I'd break his neck," muttered Bob Mahon, "if there was another doctor within forty miles."

Of all his patients, Tipperary Joe was the only one of whom he spoke without disparagement: whether that the poor fellow's indifference to his powers of terrorizing had awed or conciliated him, I know not, but he expressed himself favourably regarding his case, and his prospects of recovery.

"Them chaps always recover," drawled out the doctor in a dolorous cadence.

"Is it true," said the major, with a malicious grin — "is it true that he changed all the splints and bandages to the sound leg, and that you didn't discover the mistake for a week afterwards? — Mary Doolan told me."

"Mrs. Doolan," said the doctor, "ought to be thinking of her own misfortunes, and with an acute inflammation of the pericardium, she might be making her sowl."

"She ill? — that fine, fat, comfortable-looking woman!"

"Ay, just so, they're always fat, and have a sleepy look about the eyes just like yourself. Do you ever bleed at the nose?"

"Never without a blow on it. Come, come, I know you well, doctor; you shall not terrify me."

"You're right not to fret, for it will take you off suddenly, with a giddiness in your head, and a rolling in your eyes, and a choking feel about your throat —"

"Stop, and be d — d to you," said the major, as he cleared his voice a couple of times, and loosed the tie of his cravat. "This room is oppressively hot."

"I protest to God," said Father Tom, "my heart is in my mouth, and there isn't a bone in my body that's not aching."

"I don't wonder," chimed in the doctor; "you are another of them, and you are a surprising man to go on so long. Sure, it is two years ago I warned your niece, that when she saw you fall down, she must open a vein in your neck, if it was only with a carving-knife."

"The saints in heaven forbid!" said the priest, cutting the sign of the cross in the air: "it's maybe the jugular she'd cut."

"No," drawled out the doctor, "she needn't go so deep; and if her hand doesn't shake, there won't be much danger. Good evening to you both."

So saying, with his knees bent, and his hands crossed under the skirts of his coat, he sneaked out of the room; while the others, overcome with fear, shame, and dismay, sat silently, looking misery itself, at each side of the table.

"That fellow would kill a regiment," said the major at length. "Come, Tom, let's have a little punch, I've a kind of a trembling over me."

"Not a drop of any thing stronger than water will cross my lips this blessed night. Do you know, Bob, I think this place doesn't agree with me; I wish I was back in Murrnakilty: the mountain air, and regular habits of life, that's the thing for me."

"We are none of us abstemious enough," said the

major; "and then we bachelors — to be sure you have your niece."

"Whisht!" said the priest; "how do you know who is listening? I vow to God I am quite alarmed at his telling that to Mary; some night or other, if I take a little too much, she'll maybe try her anatomy upon me."

This unhappy reflection seemed to weigh upon the good priest's mind, and set him a mumbling certain Latin offices between his teeth for a quarter of an hour.

"I wish," said the major, "Hinton was able to read his letters, for here is a whole bundle of them — some from England, some from the Castle, and some marked 'on his majesty's service.'"

"I'll wait another week any how for him," said the priest. "To go back to Dublin in the state he is now, would be the ruin of him, after the shake he has got: the dissipation, the dining out, and all the devilment, would destroy him entirely; but a few weeks' peace and quietness up at Murranakilty, will make him as sound as a bell."

"You are right, Tom, you are right," said the major: "the poor fellow mustn't be lost for the want of a little care; and now that Dillon has gone, there is no one here to look after him. Let us go down and see if the post is in: I think a walk would do us good."

Assenting to this proposition, the priest bent over me mournfully for a moment, shook his head, and, having muttered a blessing, walked out of the room with the major, leaving me in silence to think over all I had overheard.

Whether it was that youth suggested the hope, or that I more quickly imbibed an appreciation of the doctor's character from being the looker-on at the game, I am not exactly sure; but certainly I felt little depressed by his gloomy forebodings respecting me, and greatly lightened at my heart by the good news of poor Tipperary Joe.

Of all the circumstances which attended my illness, the one that most impressed me was the warm, affectionate solicitude of my two friends — the priest and his cousin. There was something of kindness and good feeling in their care of me, that spoke rather of a long friendship than of the weaker ties of chance and passing acquaintance. Again I thought of home, and while I asked myself if the events which beset my path in Ireland could possibly have happened to me there, I could not but acknowledge that if they had so, I could scarcely have hoped to have suddenly conjured up such faithful and benevolent friends, with no other claim, nor other recommendation, save that of being a stranger.

The casual observation concerning my letters, had, by stimulating my curiosity, awakened my dormant energy; and, by a great effort, I stretched out my hand to the little bell beside my bed, and rang it. The summons was answered by the bare-legged girl who acted as waiter in the inn. When she had sufficiently recovered from her astonishment to comprehend my request, I persuaded her to place a candle beside me, and having given me the packet of letters that lay on the chimney-piece, I desired her on no account to admit any one, but say that I had fallen into a sound sleep, and should not be disturbed.

CHAPTER III.

The letter-bag.

THE package of letters was a large one, of all sizes; from all quarters they came: some from home; some from my brother officers of the Guards; some from the Castle; and even one from O'Grady.

The first I opened was a short note from Horton, the private secretary to the viceroy: this informed me that Major Mahon had written a statement to the Duke of all the circumstances attending my duel; and that his Grace had not only expressed himself highly satisfied with my conduct, but had ordered a very polite reply to be addressed to the major, thanking him for his great kindness, and saying with what pleasure he found that a member of his staff had fallen into such good hands.

"His Grace desires me to add," continued the writer, "that you need only consult your own health and convenience with respect to your return to duty; and, in fact, your leave of absence is perfectly discretionary."

My mind relieved of a weighty load by the contents of this letter, I recovered my strength already so far, that I sat up in bed to peruse the others. My next was from my father; it ran thus: —

"DEAR JACK —

"Your friend Major Mahon, to whom I write by this post, will deliver this letter to you when he deems fit. He has been most good natured in conveying to me a narrative of your late doings; and I cannot express how grateful we all are to him for the truly

friendly part he has taken towards you. After the strictest scrutiny, for I confess to you I feared lest the major's might be too partial an account, I rejoice to say that your conduct meets with my entire approbation. An older and a wiser head might, it is possible, have avoided some of the difficulties you have met with; but this I will add, that once in trouble, no one could have shown better temper, nor a more befitting spirit than you did. While I say this, my dear Jack, understand me clearly, that I speak of you as a young inexperienced man, thrown, at his very outset of life, not only among strangers, but in a country where, as I remarked to you at first, every thing was different from those in your own. You have now shown yourself equal to any circumstances in which you may be placed; I therefore not only expect that you will meet with fewer embarrassments in future, but that, should they arise, I shall have the satisfaction of finding your character and your habits will be as much your safeguard against insult, as your readiness to resent any, will be sure and certain.

“I have seen the Duke several times, and he expresses himself as much pleased with you. From what he mentions, I can collect that you are well satisfied with Ireland, and therefore I do not wish to remove you from it. At the same time, bear in mind, that by active service alone can you ever attain to, or merit, rank in the army; and that hitherto you have only been a soldier by name.”

After some further words of advice respecting the future, and some few details of family matters, he concluded by entrusting to my mother the mention of

what she herself professed to think lay more in her peculiar province.

As usual, her letter opened with some meteorological observations upon the climate of England for the preceding six weeks; then followed a journal of her own health, whose increasing delicacy, and the imperative necessity of being near Doctor Y —, rendered a journey to Ireland too dangerous to think of.

“Yes, my dearest boy,” wrote she, “nothing but this would keep me from you a moment; however, I am much relieved at learning that you are now rapidly recovering, and hope soon to hear of your return to Dublin. It is a very dreadful thing to think of, but perhaps, upon the whole, it is better that you did kill this Mr. Burke. De Grammont tells me that a *mauvaise tête* like that must be shot sooner or later. It makes me nervous to dwell on this odious topic, so that I shall pass on to something else. The horrid little man that brought your letters, and who calls himself a servant of Captain O’Grady, insisted on seeing me yesterday; I never was more shocked in my life. From what he says, I gather that he may be looked on as rather a favourable specimen of the natives: they must, indeed, be a very frightful people; and although he assured me he would do me no injury, I made Thomas stay in the room the entire time, and told Chubbs to give the alarm to the police if he heard the slightest noise: the creature, however, did nothing, and I have quite recovered from my fear already. What a picture, my dear boy, did he present to me of your conduct and habits. Your intimacy with that odious family I mentioned in my last, seems the root of all your misfortunes. Why will such people

thrust themselves forward? What do they mean by inviting you to their frightful parties? Have they not their own peculiar horrors? not but I must confess that they are more excusable than you; and I cannot conceive how you could so soon have forgotten the lessons instilled into you from your earliest years. As your poor dear grandfather, the admiral, used to say, a vulgar acquaintance is a shifting sand; you can never tell where you won't meet it; always at the most inopportune moment; and then, if you remark, your underbred people are never content with a quiet recognition, but they must always indulge in a detestable cordiality there is no escaping from. Oh, John, John, when at ten years of age, you made the banker's son at Northampton hold your stirrup as you mounted your pony, I never thought I should have this reproach to make you. The little fiend who calls himself Corny something, also mentions your continued familiarity with the young woman I spoke of before; what her intentions are, is perfectly clear, and should she accomplish her object, your position in society and future fortune, might possibly procure her large damages; but pause, my dear boy, before you go any further. I do not speak of the moral features of the case, for you are of an age to judge of them yourself; but think, I beseech you, of the difficulties it will throw around your path in life, and the obstacles it will oppose to your success. There is poor Lord Henry Effingham, and since that foolish business with the clergyman's wife or daughter, where somebody went mad, and some one else drowned or shot himself, they have never given him any appointment whatever. The world is a frightful and un-

forgiving thing, as poor Lord Henry knows, therefore beware!

“The more I think of it, the more strongly do I feel the force of my first impressions respecting Ireland; and were it not that we so constantly hear of battles and bloodshed in the Peninsula, I should even prefer your being there. There would seem to be an unhappy destiny over every thing belonging to me: my poor dear father, the admiral, had a life of hardship, almost unrewarded; for eleven years he commanded a guardship in the Nore; many a night have I seen him when I was a little girl, come home dripping with wet, and perfectly insensible, from the stimulants he was obliged to resort to, and be carried in that state to his bed; and after all this, he didn't get his blue ribbon till he was near sixty.

“De Vere is constantly with us, and is, I remark, attentive to your cousin Julia: this is not of so much consequence, as I hear that her Chancery suit is taking an unhappy turn; should it be otherwise, your interests will, of course, be looked to. De Vere is most amusing, and has a great deal of wit; but for him and the count we should be quite dreary, as the season is over, and we can't leave town for at least three weeks.” The epistle concluded with a general summing up of its contents, and an affectionate entreaty to bear in mind her caution regarding the Rooneys. “Once more, my dear boy, remember that vulgar people are a part of our trials in this life: as that delightful man, the Dean of St. George's, says, they are snares for our feet; and their subservient admiration of us is a dangerous and a

subtle temptation. Read this letter again, and believe me, my dearest John,

“Your affectionate and unhappy mother,
“CHARLOTTE HINTON.”

I shall not perform so undutiful a task as to play the critic on my excellent mother's letter: there were, it is true, many new views in life presented to me by its perusal, and I should feel sadly puzzled, were I to say at which I was more amused or shocked, at the strictness of her manners, or the laxity of her morals; but I confess, that the part which most outraged me of all, was the eulogy on Lord Dudley de Vere's conversational gifts; but a few short months before, and it is possible I should not only have credited, but concurred in the opinion, brief, however, as had been the interval, it had shown me much of life; it had brought me into acquaintance, and even intimacy, with some of the brightest spirits of the day; it had taught me to discriminate between the unmeaning jargon of conventional gossip, and the charm of a society where force of reasoning, warmth of eloquence, and brilliancy of wit contested for the palm. It had made me feel that the intellectual gifts reserved in other countries for the personal advancement of their owner, by their public and ostentatious display, can be made the ornament and the delight of the convivial board, the elegant accompaniment to the hours of happy intercourse, and the strongest bond of social union.

So gradually had this change of opinion crept over me I did not recognise in myself the conversion, and, indeed, had it not been for my mother's observations on Lord Dudley, I could not have credited how far my

convictions had gone round. I could now understand the measurement by which Irishmen were estimated in the London world. I could see that if such a character as De Vere had a reputation for ability, how totally impossible it was for those who appreciated him to prize the great and varied gifts of such men as Grattan and Curran, and many more.

Lost in such thoughts, I forgot for some moments that O'Grady's letter lay open before me. It was dated Chatham, and written the night before he sailed. The first few lines showed me that he knew nothing of my duel, having only received my own letter with an account of the steeple-chase. He wrote in high spirits. The commander-in-chief had been most kind to him, appointing him to a vacant majority, not, as he anticipated, in the 41st, but in the 9th Light Dragoons.

"I am anxiously looking out for Corny," said he, "and a great letter-bag from Ireland, the only bit of news from which, except your own, is, that the Rooneys have gone into deep mourning, themselves and their whole house. Various rumours are afloat as to whether any money speculations of Paul's may have suggested the propriety of retrenchment, or whether there may not have been a death in the royal family of O'Toole. Look to this for me, Hinton; for even in Canada I shall preserve the memory of that capital house, its excellent *cuisine*, its charming hostess. Cultivate them, my dear Jack, for your sake and for mine. One Rembrandt is as good as a gallery: so sit down before them and make a study of the family."

The letter concluded as it began, by hearty thanks for the service I had rendered him, begging me to accept of Modirideroo as a *souvenir* of his friendship,

and in a postscript, to write which the letter had evidently been re-opened, was a warning to me against any chance collision with Ulick Burke.

“Not, my dear boy, because he is a dead shot, although that same is something, but that a quarrel with him could scarcely be reputable in its commencement, and must be bad whatever the result.”

After some further cautioning on this matter, the justice of which was tolerably evident from my own experience, O’Grady concluded with a hurried postscript —

“Corny has not yet arrived, and we have received our orders for embarkation within twenty-four hours. I begin half to despair of his being here in time. Should this be the case, will you, my dear Hinton, look after the old villain for me, at least until I write to you again on the subject?”

While I was yet pondering on these last few lines, I perceived that a card had fallen from my father’s letter. I took it up, and what was my astonishment to find that it contained a correct likeness of Corny Delany, drawn with a pen, underneath which was written, in my cousin Julia’s hand, the following few lines: —

“The dear old thing has waited three days, and I think I have at length caught something like him. Dear Jack, if the master be only equal to the man, we shall never forgive you, for not letting us see him. — Yours, JULIA.”

This, of course, explained the secret of Corny’s delay. My cousin with, her habitual wilfulness, pre-

ferring the indulgence of a caprice to any thing resembling a duty; and I now had little doubt upon my mind that O'Grady's fears were well founded, and that he had been obliged to sail without his follower.

The exertion it cost me to read my letters, and the excitement produced by their perusal, fatigued and exhausted me, and, as I sank back upon my pillow, I closed my eyes and fell sound asleep, not to awake until late on the following day; but strange enough, when I did so, it was with a head clear and faculties collected — my mind refreshed by rest, unbroken by a single dream: and so restored did I feel, that, save in the debility from long confinement to bed, I was unconscious of any sense of malady.

From this hour my recovery dated. Advancing every day with rapid steps, my strength increased; and, before a week elapsed, I so far regained my lost health, that I could move about my chamber, and even lay plans for my departure.

CHAPTER IV.

Bob Mahon and the widow.

It was about eight or ten days after the events I have mentioned, when Father Tom Loftus, whose care and attention to me had been unceasing throughout, came in to inform me that all the preparations for our journey were properly made, and that by the following morning at sunrise we should be on the road.

I confess that I looked forward to my departure with anxiety. The dreary monotony of the day, spent in either perambulating my little room, or in a short walk up and down before the inn door, had done more to depress and dispirit me than even the previous ill-

ness. The good priest, it is true, came often to see me, but then there were hours spent quite alone, without the solace of a book or the sight of even a newspaper. I knew the face of every man, woman, and child in the village. I could tell their haunts, their habits, and their occupations — even the very hours of the tedious day were marked in my mind by various little incidents, that seemed to recur with unbroken precision; and if, when the pale apothecary disappeared from over the half-door of his shop, I knew that he was engaged at his one-o'clock dinner, so the clink of the old ladies' pattens, as they passed to an evening tea, told me that the day was waning, when the town-clock should strike seven. There was nothing to break the monotonous jog-trot of daily life save the appearance of a few raw subalterns, who, from some cause or other, less noticed than others of the regiment by the neighbouring gentry, strolled about the town, quizzing and laughing at the humble towns-folk, and endeavouring, by looks of most questionable gallantry, to impress the female population with a sense of their merits.

After all, mankind is pretty much the same in every country and every age. Some men ambitioning the credit of virtues the very garb of which they know not; others, and a large class too, seeking for the reputation of vices the world palliates with the appellation of fashionable. We laugh at the old courtier of Louis XIV.'s time, who, in the flattery of the age he lived in, preferred being called a "*scélérat*," an *infame scélérat*, that, by the excesses he professed, the vicious habits of the sovereign might seem less striking; and yet we see the very same thing under our own eyes every day we live. — But to return.

There was nothing to delay me longer at Loughrea. Poor Joe was so nearly recovered that in a few days more it was hoped he might leave his bed. He was in kind hands, however, and I had taken every precaution that he should want for nothing in my absence. I listened, then, with pleasure to Father Tom's detail of all his preparations; and, although I knew not whither we were going, nor how long the journey was likely to prove, yet I looked forward to it with pleasure, and only longed for the hour of setting out.

As the evening drew near, I looked anxiously out for the good father's coming. He had promised to come in early with Major Mahon, whom I had not seen for the two days previous: the major being deeply engaged in consultations with his lawyer regarding an approaching trial at the assizes. Although I could gather from his manner, as well as from the priest's, that something of moment impended, yet as neither of them more than alluded to the circumstance, I knew nothing of what was going forward.

It was eight o'clock when Father Tom made his appearance. He came alone; and by his flurried look and excited manner, I saw there was something wrong.

"What is it, father?" said I. "Where is the major?"

"Och, confound him; they have taken him at last," said he, wiping his forehead with agitation.

"Taken him?" said I. "Why, was he hiding?"

"Hiding — to be sure he was hiding, and masquerading, and disguising himself; but faith those Clare fellows, there's no coming up to them; they have such practice in their own county, they would take the devil

himself, if there was a writ out against him. And, to be sure, it was a clever trick they played old Bob."

Here the good priest took such a fit of laughing, that he was obliged to wipe his eyes.

"May I never," said he, "if it wasn't a good turn they played him, after what he did himself."

"Come, father, let's hear it."

"This was the way of it. Maybe you never remarked — of course you didn't, for you were only up there a couple of times — that opposite Bob's lodgings there was a mighty sweet-looking crature, a widow-woman; she was dressed in very discreet black, and had a sorrowful look about her, that somehow or other, I think, made her even more interesting.

"I'd like to know that widow," said Bob; 'for now that the fellows have a warrant against me, I could spend my days so pleasantly over there, comforting and consoling her.'

"Whisht," said I, 'don't you see that she is in grief.'

"Not so much in grief," said he, but she lets down two beautiful braids of her brown hair under her widow's cap; and whenever you see that, Father Tom, take my word for it, the game's not up.'

"I believe there was some reason in what he said, for the last time I went up to see him, he had the window open, and he was playing planxty Kelly with all his might on an old fiddle; and the widow would come now and then to the window, to draw the little muslin curtain, or she would open it to give a half-penny to the beggars, or she would hold out her hand to see if it was raining, and a beautiful lily-white hand

it was; but all the time, you see, it was only exchanging looks they were. Bob was a little ashamed when he saw me in the room, but he soon recovered.

“‘A very charming woman that Mrs. Moriarty is,’ said he, closing the window. ‘It’s a cruel pity that her fortune is all in the Grand Canal — I mean Canal debentures. But indeed it comes pretty much to the same thing.’

“And so he went on raving about the widow; for by this time he knew all about it. Her maiden-name was Cassidy, and her father a distiller; and, in fact, Bob was quite delighted with his beautiful neighbour. At last I bid him good-bye, promising to call for him at eight o’clock to come over here to you; for you see there was a back-door to the house, that led into a small alley, by which Mahon used to make his escape in the evening. He was sitting, it seems, at his window, looking out for the widow, who for some cause or other hadn’t made her appearance the entire of the day. There he sat, with his hand on his heart, and a heavenly smile upon him for a good hour, sipping a little whiskey and water between times, to keep up his courage.

“‘She must be out,’ said Bob to himself. ‘She’s gone to pass the day somewhere. I hope she doesn’t know any of those impudent vagabonds up at the barracks. Maybe, after all, it’s sick she is.’

“While he was ruminating this way, who should he see turn the corner but the widow herself. There she was, coming along, in deep weeds, with her maid after her, a fine slashing-looking figure, rather taller than he thought and lustier every way; but it was the first time he saw her in the streets. As she got near

to her door, Bob stood up to make a polite bow. Just as he did so, the widow slipped her foot, and fell down on the flags with a loud scream. The maid ran up, endeavouring to assist her, but she couldn't stir; and as she placed her hand on her leg, Bob perceived at once she had sprained her ankle. Without waiting for his hat he sprung down stairs, and rushed across the street.

"“Mrs. Moriarty, my angel!” said Bob, putting his arm round her waist. ‘Won’t you permit me to assist you?’

“She clasped his hand with fervent gratitude, while the maid, putting her hand into her reticule, seemed fumbling for a handkerchief.

““I am a stranger to you, Ma’am,’ said Bob; ‘but if Major Mahon, of the Roscommon —’

““The very man we want,’ said the maid, pulling a writ out of the reticule: for a devil a thing else they were but two bailiffs from Ennis.

““The very man we want,’ said the bailiffs.

““I am caught!’ said Bob.

““The devil a doubt of it.’

“At the same moment the window opened overhead, and the beautiful widow looked out to see what was the matter.

““Good evening to you, Ma’am,’ says Bob; ‘and I’d like to pay my respects, if I wasn’t particularly engaged to these ladies here.’ And with that he gave an arm to each of them, and led them down the street, as if it was his mother and sister.

“The poor major,” said I. “And where is he now?”

“On his way to Ennis in a post-chaise, for it seems the ladies had a hundred pounds for their capture. Ah! poor Bob! But there is no use fretting, besides it would be sympathy thrown away, for he’ll give them the slip before long. And now, captain, are you ready for the road? I have got a peremptory letter from the bishop, and must be back in Murranakilty as soon as I can.”

“My dear father, I am at your disposal. I believe we can do no more for poor Joe; and as to Mr. Burke — and, by-the-bye, how is he?”

“Getting better, they say. But, I believe, you’ve spoiled a very lucrative source of his income. He was the best jumper in the west of Ireland; and they tell me, you’ve lamed him for life. He is down at Milltown, or Kilkee, or somewhere on the coast; but sure we’ll have time enough to talk of these things as we go along. I’ll be with you by seven o’clock. We must start early, and get to Portumna before night.”

Having promised implicit obedience to the worthy priest’s directions, be they what they might, I pledged myself to make up my baggage in the smallest possible space, and have breakfast ready for him before starting. After a few other observations and some suggestions as to the kind of equipment he deemed suitable to the road, he took his leave, and I sat down alone to a little quiet reckoning with myself as to the past, the present, and the future.

From my short experience of Ireland, the only thing approaching to an abstract principle I could attain to, was the utter vanity, the perfect impossibility of any man’s determining on a given line of action, or the steady pursuit of any one enterprise. No; the inevi-

table course of fate seems to have chosen this happy island to exhibit its phenomena — whether your days be passed in love or war, or your evenings in drink or devotion, not yours be the glory: for there would seem to be a kind of headlong influence at work, impelling you ever forward. Acquaintances grow up, ripen, and even bear fruit, before, in other lands, their roots would have caught the earth: by them your tastes are regulated, your habits controlled, your actions fashioned. You may not, it is true, lisp in the *patois* of blarney. You may weed your phraseology of its tropes and figures, but trust me, that if you live in Ireland — if you like the people, and who does not? — and if you are liked by them, and who would not be? — then, do I say, you will find yourself, without knowing or perceiving it, going the pace with the natives, — courtship, fun, frolic, and devilment, filling up every hour of your day, and no inconsiderable portion of your night also. One grand feature of the country seemed to me, that no matter what particular extravagance you were addicted to — no matter what strange or absurd passion to do, or seem something remarkable — you were certain of always finding some one to sympathize with, if not actually to follow you. Nothing is too strange, nothing too ridiculous, nothing too convivial, nothing too daring for Paddy. With one intuitive bound he springs into your confidence and enters into your plans. Only be open with him, conceal nothing, and he's yours, heart and hand; ready to endorse your bill, to carry off a young lady, or carry a message — to burn a house for a joke, or jeopardy his neck for mere pastime — to go to the world's end to serve you, and, on his return, shoot you

afterwards out of downright good nature. As for myself, I might have lived in England to the age of Methuselah, and yet never have seen as much of life as in the few months spent in Ireland. Society in other lands seems a kind of freemasonry, where, for lack of every real or important secret, men substitute signs and pass-words, as if to throw the charm of mystery where, after all, nothing lies concealed; but in Ireland, where national character runs in a deep or hidden channel, with cross currents and back water ever turning and winding — where all the incongruous and discordant elements of what is best and worst seem blended together — there, social intercourse is free, cordial, warm, and benevolent. Men come together disposed to like each other; and what an Irishman is disposed to, he usually has a way of effecting. My brief career had not been without its troubles; but who would not have incurred such, or as many more, to have evoked such kind interest and such warm friendship? From Phil O'Grady, my first, to Father Tom, my last friend, I had met with nothing but almost brotherly affection; and yet, I could not help acknowledging to myself that, but six short months before, I would have recoiled from the friendship of the one and the acquaintance of the other, as something to lower and degrade me. Not only would the outward observances of their manner have deterred me, but, in their very warm and earnest proffers of good-nature, I would have seen cause for suspecting and avoiding them. Thank heaven, I now knew better, and felt deeper. How this revolution became effected in me I am not myself aware, perhaps — I only say perhaps — Miss Bellew had a share in effecting it.

Such were some of my thoughts as I betook myself to bed, and soon after to sleep.

CHAPTER V.

The priest's gig.

I AM by no means certain that the prejudices of my English education were sufficiently overcome to prevent my feeling a kind of tingling of shame, as I took my place beside Father Tom Loftus in his gig. Early as it was, there were still some people about; and I cast a hurried glance around, to see if our equipage was not as much a matter of amusement to them as of affliction to me.

When Father Tom first spoke of his "dennet," I innocently pictured to myself something resembling the indigenous productions of Loughrea. "A little heavy or so," thought I; "strong for country roads — mayhap somewhat clumsy in the springs, and not over refined about the shafts." Heaven help my ignorance! I never fancied a vehicle whose component parts were two stout poles, surmounting a pair of low wheels, high above which was suspended, on two lofty C springs, the body of an ancient buggy; the lining of a bright scarlet, a little faded and dimmed by time, bordered by a lace of the most gaudy pattern; a flaming coat of arms, with splendid blazonry and magnificent quarterings, ornamented each panel of this strange-looking tub, into which, for default of steps, you mounted by a ladder.

"Eh, father," said I, "what have we here? this is surely not the —"

"Ay, captain," said the good priest, as a smile of proud satisfaction curled his lip, "that's 'the convaniency;' and a pleasanter and an easier never did

man sit in — a little heavy, to be sure; but then one can always walk up the hills, and if they're very stiff ones entirely, why it's only throwing out the ballast."

"The ballast! — what do you mean?"

"Just them," said he, pointing with his whip to some three or four huge pieces of lime-stone rock that lay in the bottom of the gig; "there's seven — maybe eight stone weight; every pound of it."

"And for heaven's sake," said I, "why do you carry that mass of rubbish along with you?"

"I'll just tell you then. The road has holes in it you could bury your father in, and when the conveyance gets into one of them, she has a way of springing up into the air, that, if you're not watching, is sure to pitch you out — maybe into the bog at the side — maybe on the beast's back: I was once actually thrown into a public-house window, where there was a great deal of fun going on, and the bishop came by before I extricated myself. I assure you I had hard work to explain it to his satisfaction." There was a lurking drollery in his eye, as he said these last few words, that left me to the full as much puzzled about the accident as his worthy diocesan. "But look at the springs," he continued, "there's metal for you! and do you mind the shape of the body? it's for all the world like the ancient *curriculus*. And look at Bathershin himself — the ould varmint! sure he's classical too — hasn't he a Roman nose? and ain't I a Roman myself? So get up, captain — *ascendite ad currum* — get into the shay. And now for the *doch an dhurras* — the stirrup-cup, Mrs. Doolan: that's the darlin'. Ah, there's nothing like it! —

“ ‘Sit mihi lagena,
Ad summum plena.’ ”

Here captain, take a pull — beautiful milk punch!”

Draining the goblet to the bottom, which I confess was no unpleasant task, I pledged my kind hostess, who, curtseying deeply, refilled the vessel for Father Tom.

“That’s it, Mary; froth it up, acushla. Hand it here, my darling, — my blessing on ye.”

As he spoke, the worthy father deposited the reins at his feet, and lifted the cup with both hands to his mouth; when suddenly the little window over the inn door was burst open, and a loud tally-ho was shouted out, in accents the wildest I ever listened to. I had barely time to catch the merry features of poor Tipperary Joe, when the priest’s horse, more accustomed to the hunting-field than the high-road, caught up the welcome sound, gave a wild toss of his head, cocked up his tail, and, with a hearty bang of both hind legs against the front of the chariot, set off down the street as if the devil were after him. Feeling himself at liberty, as well as favoured by the ground, which was all down hill, the pace was really terrific. It was some time before I could gather up the reins, as Father Tom, jug and all, had been thrown at the first shock on his knees to the bottom of the convaniency, where, half-suffocated by fright and the milk punch that went wrong with him, he bellowed and coughed with all his might.

“Howld him tight — ugh, ugh, ugh! not too hard — don’t chuck him for the love of — ugh, ugh, ugh! the reins is rotten, and the traces no better — ugh, ugh, ugh! Bad luck to the villains, why didn’t they

catch his head? — and the *stultus execrabilis!* — the damned fool! how he yelled!”

Almost fainting with laughter, I pulled my best at the old horse, not, however, neglecting the priest's caution about the frailty of the harness. This, however, was not the only difficulty I had to contend with, for the curriculum participating in the galloping action of the horse, swung upwards and downwards, backwards and forwards, and from one side to the other — all at once too — in a manner so perfectly addling, that it was not before we reached the first turnpike that I succeeded in arresting our progress. Here a short halt was necessary for the priest to recover himself, and examine whether either his bones or any portion of the harness had given way: both had happily been found proof against mishaps, and drew from the reverend father strong encomiums upon their merits; and after a brief delay we resumed our road, but at a much more orderly and becoming pace than before.

Once more *en route*, I bethought me it was high time to inquire about the direction we were about to travel, and the probable length of our journey; for I confess I was sadly ignorant as to the geography of the land we were travelling, and the only point I attempted to keep in view was the number of miles we were distant from the capital. The priest's reply was, however, any thing but instructive to me, consisting merely of a long catalogue of names, in which the syllables “kill,” “whack,” “nock,” “shock,” and “bally,” jostled and elbowed each other in the rudest fashion imaginable; — the only intelligible portion of his description being, that a blue mountain scarcely percep-

tible in the horizon lay about half way between us and Murranakilty.

My attention was not, however, permitted to dwell on these matters; for my companion had already begun a narrative of the events which had occurred during my illness. The Dillons, I found, had left for Dublin, soon after my mishap. Louisa Bellew returned to her father: and Mr. Burke, whose wound had turned out a more serious affair than was at first supposed, was still confined to his bed, and a lameness for life anticipated as the inevitable result of the injury.

“Sir Simon, for once in his life,” said the priest, “has taken a correct view of his nephew’s character; and has, now that all danger to life is past, written him a severe letter, reflecting on his conduct. Poor Sir Simon! his life has been one tissue of trial and disappointment throughout. Every buttress that supported his venerable house giving way, one by one, the ruin seems to threaten total downfall, ere the old man exchange the home of his fathers for his last narrow rest beside them in the church-yard. Betrayed on every hand, wronged, and ruined, he seems merely to linger on in life; like the stern-timbers of some mighty wreck, that marks the spot where once the goodly vessel perished, and are now the beacon of the quicksand to others. You know the sad story, of course, that I chiefly alluded to —”

“No. I am completely ignorant of the family history,” said I.

The priest blushed deeply, as his dark eyebrows met in a heavy frown: then turning hastily towards me, he said, in a voice whose thick, low utterance bespoke his agitation —

“Do not ask me, I beseech you, to speak further of what — had I been more collected — I had never alluded to! An unhappy duel, the consequence of a still more unhappy event, has blasted every hope in life for my poor friend. I thought — that is, I feared — lest the story might have reached you. As I find this is not so, you will spare my recurring to that, the bare recollection of which comes like a dark cloud over the happiest day of my existence. Promise me this, or I shall not forgive myself.”

I readily gave the pledge he required; and we pursued our road: not, however, as before, but each sunk in his own reflections — silent, reserved, and thoughtful.

“In about four days,” said Father Tom, at last breaking the silence, “perhaps five, we’ll be drawing near Murranakilty.” He then proceeded, at more length, to inform me of the various counties through which we were to pass, detailing with great accuracy the several seats we should see, the remarkable places, the ruined churches, the old castles, and even the very fox covers that lay on our route. And although my ignorance was but little enlightened by the catalogue of hard names that fell as glibly from his tongue as Italian from a Roman, yet I was both entertained and pleased with the many stories he told: some of them legends of by-gone days, some of them the more touching and truth-dealing records of what had happened in his own time. Could I have borrowed any portion of his narrative power — were I able to present, in his strong but simple language, any of the curious scenes he mentioned, I should perhaps venture on relating to my reader one of his stories; but when I think how much of the interest depended on his quaint and homely, but

ever forcible manner, as, pointing with his whip to some ruined house with blackened walls and fallen chimnies, he told some narrative of rapine and of murder, I feel how much the force of reality added power to a story that in repetition might be weak and ineffective.

CHAPTER VI.

The mountain pass.

ON the whole, the journey to me was a delightful one, and certainly not the least pleasant portion of my life in Ireland. Endowed — partly from his individual gifts, partly from the nature of his sacred functions — with influence over all the humble ranks in life, the good priest jogged along with the assurance of a hearty welcome wherever he pleased to halt, the only look of disappointment being when he declined some proffered civility, or refused an invitation to delay his journey. The chariot was well known in every town and village, and scarcely was the rumble of its wheels heard coming up the “street,” when the population might be seen assembling in little groups and knots, to have a word with “the father” — to get his blessing — to catch his eye, or even obtain a nod from him. He knew every one and every thing, and with a tact which is believed to be the prerogative of royalty, he never miscalled a name nor mistook an event. Inquiring after them, for soul and body, he entered with real interest into all their hopes and plans, their fears and anticipations, and talked away about pigs, penances, purgatory, and potatoes, in a way that showed his information, on any of these matters, to be of no mean or common order.

By degrees our way left the more travelled high road, and took by a mountain track through a wild romantic line of country beside the Shannon. No villages now presented themselves, and indeed but little trace of any habitation whatever: large misshapen mountains, whose granite sides were scarce concealed by the dark fern, the only vegetation that clothed them, rose around and about us. In the valleys some strips of bog might be seen with little hillocks of newly-cut turf, the only semblance of man's work the eye could rest on. Tillage there was none. A dreary silence, too, reigned throughout. I listened in vain for the bleating of a lamb or the solitary tinkle of a sheep-bell; but no — save the cawing of the rooks or the mournful cry of the plover, I could hear nothing. Now and then, it is true, the heavy flapping of a strong wing would point the course of a heron soaring towards the river, but his low flight even spoke of solitude, and showed he feared not man, in his wild and dreary mountains. At intervals we could see the Shannon winding along, far, far down below us, and I could mark the islands in the bay of Scariff, with their ruined churches and one solitary tower; but no sail floated on the surface, nor did an oar break the sluggish current of the stream. It was, indeed, a dreary scene, and somehow my companion's manner seemed coloured by its influence, for scarcely had we entered the little valley that led to this mountain track, than he became silent and thoughtful, absorbed in reflection, and when he spoke, either doing so at random or in a vague and almost incoherent way that showed his ideas were wandering.

I remarked that, as we stopped at a little forge

shortly after daybreak, the smith had taken the priest aside and whispered to him a few words, at which he seemed strangely moved; and as they spoke together for some moments in an under-tone, I perceived by the man's manner and gesture as well as by the agitation of the good father himself, that something of importance was being told. Without waiting to finish the little repair to the carriage, which had caused our halt, he re-mounted hastily, and, beckoning me to take my place, drove on at a pace that spoke of haste and eagerness. I confess that my curiosity to know the reason was great, but as I could not with propriety ask, nor did my companion seem disposed to give the information, I soon relapsed into a silence unbroken as his own, and we travelled along for some miles without speaking. Now and then the priest would make an effort to relieve the weariness of the way by some remark upon the scenery, or some allusion to the wild grandeur of the pass; but it was plain he spoke only from constraint, and that his mind was occupied on other and very different thoughts. It was now wearing late, and yet no trace of any house or habitation could I see, where to rest for the night. Not wishing, however, to interrupt the current of my friend's thoughts, I maintained my silence, straining my eyes on every side, from the dark mountains that towered above me, to the narrow gloomy valley that lay several hundred feet beneath our track — but all in vain. The stillness was unbroken, and not a roof, not even a smoke-wreath could be seen far as the view extended.

The road by which we travelled was scarped from the side of a mountain, and for some miles pursued a

gradually descending course. On suddenly turning the angle of a rocky wall that skirted us for above a mile, we came in sight of a long reach of the Shannon upon which the sun was now setting in all its golden lustre. The distant shore of Munster, rich in tillage and pasture-land, was lit up, too, with corn-field and green meadow, leafy wood and blue mountain, all glowing in their brightest hue. It was a vivid and a gorgeous picture, and I could have looked on it long with pleasure, when suddenly I felt my arm grasped by a strong finger. I turned round, and the priest, relaxing his hold, pointed down into the dark valley below us, as he said in a low and agitated voice — “You see the light — it is there — there.” Quickening our pace by every effort, we began rapidly to descend the mountain by a zig-zag road, whose windings soon lost us the view I have mentioned, and left nothing but the wild and barren mountains around us. Tired as our poor horse was, the priest pressed him forward, and regardless of the broken and rugged way, he seemed to think of nothing but his haste, muttering between his teeth with a low but rapid articulation, while his face grew flushed and pale at intervals, and his eye had all the lustrous glare and restless look of fever. I endeavoured, as well as I was able, to occupy my mind with other thoughts, but with that invincible fascination that turns us ever to the side we try to shun, I found myself again and again gazing on my companion’s countenance. Every moment now his agitation increased; his lips were firmly closed; his brow contracted; his cheek flattened, and quivering with a nervous spasm, while his hand trembled vio-

lently as he wiped the big drops of sweat that rolled in agony from his forehead.

At last we reached the level, where a better road presented itself before us, and enabled us so to increase our speed that we were rapidly coming up with the light, which, as the evening closed in, seemed larger and brighter than before. It was now that hour when the twilight seems fading into night, a gray and sombre darkness colouring every object, but yet marking grass and rock, pathway and river with some seeming of their noonday hues, so that as we came along I could make out the roof and walls of a mud cabin built against the very mountain side, in the gable of which the light was shining. A rapid, a momentary thought flashed across my mind as to what dreary and solitary man could fix his dwelling-place in such a spot as this, when in an instant the priest suddenly pulled up the horse, and, stretching out one hand with a gesture of listening, whispered — “Hark! — did you not hear that?” As he spoke, a cry, wild and fearful, rose through the gloomy valley — at first in one prolonged and swelling note, then broken as if by sobs, it faltered, sunk, and rose again wilder and madder, till the echoes, catching up the direful sounds, answered and repeated them as though a chorus of unearthly spirits were calling to each other through the air.

“O God! too late — too late,” said the priest, as he bowed his face upon his knees, and his strong frame shook in agony. “O Father of mercy,” he cried, as he lifted his eyes, bloodshot and tearful, toward heaven, “forgive me this — and if unshriven before thee —.” Another cry, more frantic than before, here burst upon

us, and the priest, muttering with rapid utterance, appeared lost in prayer. But at him I looked no longer, for straight before us on the road, and in front of the little cabin, now not above thirty paces from us, knelt the figure of a woman, whom, were it not from the fearful sounds we had heard, one could scarce believe a thing of life: her age not more than thirty years; she was pale as death; not a tinge, not a ray of colour streaked her bloodless cheek; her black hair, long and wild, fell upon her back and shoulders, straggling and disordered; her hands were clasped as she held her stiffened arms straight before her. Her dress bespoke the meanest poverty, and her sunk cheek and drawn-in lips betokened famine and starvation. As I gazed on her almost breathless with awe and dread, the priest leaped out, and hurrying forward, called out to her in Irish, but she heard him not, she saw him not; — dead to every sense, she remained still and motionless. No feature trembled, no limb was shaken; she knelt before us, like an image of stone; and then, as if by some spell that worked within her, once more gave forth the heart-rending cry we heard at first. Now, low and plaintive, like the sighing night-wind, it rose fuller and fuller, pausing and continuing at intervals, and then breaking into short and fitful efforts, it grew wilder and stronger, till, at last, with one outbreak, like the overflowing of a heart of misery, it ceased abruptly.

The priest bent over her and spoke to her; he called her by her name, and shook her several times — but all in vain. Her spirit, if indeed, present with her body, had lost all sympathy with things of earth.

"God help her," said he; "God comfort her. This is sore affliction."

As he spoke he walked towards the little cabin, the door of which now stood open. All was still and silent within its walls. Unused to see the dwellings of the poor in Ireland, my eye ranged over the bare walls, the damp and earthen floor, the few and miserable pieces of furniture — when suddenly my attention was called to another and a sadder spectacle. In one corner of the hovel, stretched upon a bed, whose poverty might have made it unworthy of a dog to lie in, lay the figure of a large and powerfully-built man, stone dead. His eyes were closed, and the chin bound up with a white cloth, and a sheet, torn and ragged, was stretched above his cold limbs, while on either side of him two candles were burning. His features, though rigid and stiffened, were manly, and even handsome; the bold character of the face heightened in effect by his beard and moustache, which appeared to have been let grow for some time previous, and whose black and waving curl looked darker, from the pallor around it. Some lines there were about the mouth, that looked like harshness and severity, but the struggle of departing life might have caused them.

Gently withdrawing the sheet that covered him, the priest placed his hand upon his heart. It was evident to me, from his manner, that he still believed him living; and as he rolled back the covering he felt for his hand. Suddenly starting, he fell back for an instant, and as he moved his fingers backwards and forwards, I saw that they were covered with blood. I drew near, and now perceived that the dead man's chest was laid open by a wound of several inches in

extent. The ribs had been cut across, and some portion of the heart or lung seemed to protrude. At the slightest touch of the body, the blood gushed forth anew, and ran in streams upon him. His right hand, too, was cut across the entire palm — the thumb nearly severed at the joint. This appeared to have been rudely bound together; but it was evident, from the nature and the size of the other wound, that he could not have survived it many hours.

As I looked in horror at the frightful spectacle before me, my foot struck at something beneath the bed. I stooped down to examine, and found it was a carbine, such as dragoons usually carry. It was broken at the stock, and bruised in many places, but still seemed not unserviceable. Part of the butt-end was also stained with blood. The clothes of the dead man, clotted and matted with gore, were also there, adding, by their terrible testimony, to the dreadful fear that haunted me. Yes, every thing confirmed it, — murder and crime had been there. A low, muttering sound near made me turn my head, and I saw the priest kneeling beside the bed, engaged in prayer. His head was bare, and he wore a kind of scarf of blue silk, and the small case that contained the last rites of his church, was placed at his feet.

Apparently lost to all around, save the figure of the man that lay dead before him, he muttered, with ceaseless rapidity, prayer after prayer, stopping, ever and anon, to place his hand on the cold heart, or to listen, with his ear upon the livid lips; and then resuming, with greater eagerness, while the big drops rolled from his forehead, and the agonising torture he felt, convulsed his entire frame.

“O God!” he exclaimed, after a prayer of some minutes, in which his features worked like one in a fit of epilepsy — “O God, is it then too late!”

He started to his feet as he spoke, and bending over the corpse, with hands clasped above his head, he poured forth a whole torrent of words in Irish, swaying his body backwards and forwards, as his voice, becoming broken by emotion, now sunk into a whisper, or broke into a discordant shout: — “Shaun, Shaun,” cried he, as stooping down to the ground he snatched up the little crucifix and held it before the dead man’s face, at the same time he shook him violently by the shoulder, and cried, in accents I can never forget, some words aloud, among which alone I could recognise one word — Thea — the Irish word for God. He shook him till the head rocked heavily from side to side, and the blood oozed from the opening wound, and stained the ragged covering of the bed. At this instant the priest stopped suddenly, and fell upon his knees, while, with a low, faint sigh, he who seemed dead lifted his eyes and looked around him, his hands grasped the sides of the bed, and, with a strength that seemed supernatural, he raised himself to the sitting posture. His lips were parted and moved, but without a sound, and his filmy eyes turned slowly in their sockets from one object to another, till, at length, they fell upon the little crucifix that had dropped from the priest’s hand upon the bed. In an instant the corpse-like features seemed inspired with life — a gleam of brightness shot from his eyes — the head nodded forward a couple of times, and I thought I heard a discordant, broken sound issue from the open mouth, and, a moment after,

the head dropped upon the chest, and the hands relaxed, and he fell back with a crash, never to move more.

Overcome with horror, I staggered to the door, and sank upon a little bench in front of the cabin. The cool air of the night soon brought me to myself, and while, in my confused state, I wondered if the whole might not be some dreadful dream, my eyes once more fell upon the figure of the woman, who still knelt in the attitude we had first seen her. Her hands were clasped before her, and from time to time her wild cry rose into the air, and woke the echoes of that silent valley. A faint moonlight lay in broken patches around her, and mingled its beams with the red glare of the little candles within, as their light fell upon her marble features. From the cabin I could hear the sounds of the priest's voice, as he continued to pray without ceasing. As the hours rolled on nothing changed, and when, prompted by curiosity, I looked within the hovel, I saw the priest still kneeling beside the bed, his face pale, and sunk, and haggard, as though months of sickness and suffering had passed over him.

I dared not speak — I dared not disturb him, and I sat down near the door in silence.

It is one of the strange anomalies of our nature, that the feelings which rent our hearts with agony have a tendency, by their continuance, to lull us into slumber. The watcher by the bed-side of his dying friend — the felon in his cell, but a few hours before death, sleep — and sleep soundly. The bitterness of grief would seem to blunt sensation, and the mind, like the body, can only sustain a certain amount of burden, after which it succumbs and yields; so I found it amid this scene of horror and anguish, with every thing to excite

that can operate upon the mind; — the woman stricken motionless and senseless by grief — the dead man as it were recalled to life by the words that were to herald him into life everlasting — the old man, whom I had known but as a gay companion, displayed now before my eyes in all the workings of his feeling heart, called up by the afflictions of one world and the terrors of another; and this in a wild and dreary valley, far from man's dwelling. Yet, amid all this, and more than all, the harassing conviction that some deed of blood, some dark hour of crime had been here at work, perhaps to be concealed for ever, and go unavenged, save of heaven — and yet, with this around and about me, I slept. How long I know not; but when I woke the mist of morning hung in the valley, or rolled, in masses of cloud-like vapour, along the mountain-side. In an instant, the whole scene of the previous night was before me, and the priest still knelt beside the bed and prayed. I looked for the woman, but she was gone.

The noise of wheels, at some distance, could now be heard on the mountain-road; and as I walked stealthily from the door, I could see three figures descending the pass, followed by a car and horse. As they came along, I marked that beneath the straw on the car, something protruded itself on either side, and this, I soon saw, was a coffin. As the men approached the angle of the road they halted, and seemed to converse in an eager and anxious manner, when, suddenly, one of them broke from the others, and, springing to the top of a low wall that skirted the road, continued to look steadily at the house for some minutes together. The thought flashed on me at the moment, that perhaps my being a stranger to them might have caused their

hesitation, so I waved my hat a couple of times above my head. Upon this they resumed their march, and in a few minutes more were standing beside me. One of them, who was an old man, with hard, weather-beaten features, addressed me, first in Irish, but correcting himself, at once asked, in a low, steady voice: —

“Was the priest in time? Did he get the rites?”

I nodded in reply; when he muttered, as if to himself: —

“God’s will be done. Shaun didn’t tell of Hogan—”

“Whisht! father — whisht!” said one of the younger men, as he laid his hand upon the old man’s arm; while he added something in Irish, gesticulating with energy as he spoke.

“Is Mary come back, Sir?” said the third, as he touched his hat to me respectfully.

“The woman — his wife?” said I; “I have not seen her to-day.”

“She was up with us, at Kiltimmon, at two o’clock this morning, but wouldn’t wait for us. She wanted to get back at once, poor crayture. She bears it well, and has the stout heart. — Faith, maybe before long she’ll make some others faint in their hearts, that have stricken hers this night.”

“Was she calm, then?” said I.

“As you are this minute; and sure enough she helped me, with her own hands, to put the horse in the car; for, you see, I couldn’t lift the shaft with my one arm.”

I now saw that his arm was bound up, and buttoned within the bosom of his great coat.

The priest now joined us, and spoke for several minutes in Irish; and, although ignorant of all he said,

I could mark, in the tone of his voice, his look, his manner, and his gesture, that his words were those of rebuke and reprobation. The old man heard him in silence, but without any evidence of feeling. The others, on the contrary, seemed deeply affected, and the younger of the two, whose arm was broken, seemed greatly moved, and the tears rolled down his hardy cheeks.

These signs of emotion were evidently displeasing to the old man, whose nature was of a sterner and more cruel mould; and, as he turned away from the Father's admonition, he moved past me, muttering, as he went: —

“Isn't it all fair? — blood for blood; and sure they dhruv him to it.”

After a few words from the priest, two of the party took their spades from the car, and began digging the grave; while Father Loftus, leading the other aside, talked to him for some time.

“Be gorra,” said the old man, as he shovelled the earth to either side, “Father Tom isn't like himself, at all, at all. He used to have pity, and the kind word for the poor, when they were turned out on the world to starve, without as much as a sheaf of straw to lie upon, or potatoes enough for the children to eat.”

“Whisht, father, or the priest will hear ye,” said the younger one, looking cautiously around.

“Sorrow bit o' me cares; if he does, it's thruth I'm telling. — You are not long in these parts, Sir, av I may make so bowld?”

“No,” said I, “I'm quite a stranger.”

“Well, any how, ye may understand that this isn't a fine soil for a potato-garden; and yet, the devil a other poor Shaun had, since they turned him out on

the road last Michaelmas-day, himself, and his wife, and the little gossoon — the only one they had, too — with a fever and ague upon him. The poor child, however, didn't feel it long, for he died ten days after. Well, well! the ways of God there's no saying against. But sure, if the little boy didn't die, Shaun was off to America, for he tuk his passage, and got a sea-chest of a friend, and was all ready to go; but, you see, when the child died, he could not bring himself to leave the grave; and there he used to go and spend half of his days fixing it, and settling the sods about it, and wouldn't take a day's work from any of the neighbours; and at last he went off one night, and we never knew what was become of him till a pedlar brought word that he and Mary was living in the Cluan Beg, away from every body, without a friend to say 'God save you!' — It's deep enough now, Mickey — there's nobody will turn him out of this. — And so, Sir, he might have lived for many a year; but when he heerd that the boys was up, and going to settle a reckoning with Mr. Tarleton —"

"Come you," cried the priest, who joined us at the moment, and from whose look I could perceive was evidently displeased at the old man's communicativeness — "Come you; the sooner you all get back the better. We must look after Mary, too; for God knows where she is wandering. And now let us put the poor boy in the earth."

With slow and sullen steps the old man entered the house, followed by the others. I did not accompany them, but stood beside the grave, my mind full of all I heard. In a few minutes they returned, carrying the coffin, one corner of which was borne by the priest

himself. Their heads were bare, and their features were pale and care-worn. They placed the body in the grave, and gazed down after it for some seconds. The priest spoke a few words, in a low, broken voice, the very sounds of which, though their meaning was unknown to me, sunk deep into my heart. He whispered for an instant to one of the young men, who went into the cabin, and speedily returned, carrying with him some of the clothes of the deceased, and the old carbine that lay beneath the bed.

"Throw them in the grave, Mickey — throw them in," said the priest. "Where's his coat?"

"It isn't there, Sir," said the man. "That's every thing that has a mark of blood upon it."

"Give me that gun," cried the priest; and at the same moment he took the carbine by the end of the barrel, and by one stroke of his strong foot snapped it at the breech. "My curse be on you," said he, as he kicked the fragments into the grave; "there was peace and happiness in the land before men knew ye, and owned ye. Ah! Hugh," said he, turning his eyes fiercely on the old man, "I never said ye hadn't griefs and trials, and sore ones, too, some of them; but, God help you, if ye think that an easy conscience and a happy home can be bought by murder." The old man started at the words, and as his dark brow loured, and his lip trembled, I drew near to the priest, fearful lest an attack might be made on him. "Ay, murder, boys — that's the word, and no less. Don't tell me about righting yourselves; and blood for blood, and all that. There's a curse upon the land where these things happen, and the earth is not lucky that is moistened with the blood of God's creatures."

“Cover him up — cover him up!” said the old man, shovelling in the earth, so as to drown the priest’s words, “and let us be going. We ought to be back by six o’clock, unless,” added he, with a sarcastic bitterness that made him look like a fiend — “unless your reverence is going to set the police on our track.”

“God forgive you, Hugh, and turn your heart,” said the old man, as he shook his outstretched hands at him. As he spoke these words he took me by the arm, and led me within the house. I could feel his hand tremble as it leaned upon me, and the big tears rolled down his cheeks in silence.

We sat down in the little cabin, but neither of us spoke. After some time we heard the noise of the cart-wheels, and the sound of voices, which grew fainter and fainter as they passed up the glen, and, at length, all became still.

“And the poor wife,” said I, “what, think you, has become of her?”

“Gone home to her people, most likely,” answered the priest. “Her misfortunes will make her a home in every cabin. None so poor, none so wretched as not to succour and shelter her. But let us hence.”

We walked forth from the hovel, and the priest, closing the door after him, fastened it with a padlock that he had found within, and then placing the key upon the door-sill, he turned to depart—but, suddenly stopping, he took my hand in both of his, and said, in a voice of touching earnestness:—

“This has been a sad scene. Would to God you had not witnessed it. Would to God, rather, that it might not have occurred. But promise me, on the faith of a man of honour, and the word of a gentleman, that

what you have seen this night you reveal to no man, until I have passed away myself, and stand before that judgment to which we all are coming."

"I promise you faithfully," said I. "And now let us leave a spot that has thrown a gloom upon my heart, a life long will never obliterate."

CHAPTER VII.

The journey.

As we issued from the glen the country became more open, patches of cultivation presented themselves, and an air of comfort and condition superior to what we had hitherto seen was observable in the dwellings of the country people. The road led through a broad valley bounded on one side by a chain of lofty mountains, and on the other separated by the Shannon from the swelling hills of Munster. Deeply engaged in our thoughts, we travelled along for some miles without speaking. The scene we had witnessed was of that kind that seemed to forbid our recurrence to it, save in our own gloomy reflections. We had not gone far when the noise of horsemen on the road behind us induced us to turn our heads. They came along at a sharp trot, and we could soon perceive that although the two or three foremost were civilians, they who followed were dragoons. I thought I saw the priest change colour as the clank of the accoutrements struck upon his ear. I had, however, but little time for the observation as the party soon overtook us.

"You are early on the road, gentlemen," said a strong powerfully built man, who, mounted upon a gray horse of great bone and action, rode close up beside us.

"Ah, Sir Thomas, is it you?" said the priest, affecting at once his former easy and indifferent manner. "I had rather see the hounds at your back than those beagles of King George there. Is there any thing wrong in the country?"

"Let me ask you another question," said the knight in answer. "How long have you been in it, and where did you pass the night, not to hear of what has occurred?"

"Faith, a home question," said the priest, summoning up a hearty laugh to conceal his emotion; "but if the truth must out, we came round by the priory at Glenduff, as my friend here being an Englishman — may I beg to present him to you — Mr. Hinton — Sir Thomas Garland — he heard wonders of the monks' way of living up there, and I wished to let him judge for himself."

"Ah, that accounts for it," said the tall man to himself. "We have had a sad affair of it, Father Tom. Poor Tarleton has been murdered."

"Murdered!" said the priest, with an expression of horror in his countenance I could scarcely believe feigned.

"Yes, murdered. The house was attacked a little after midnight. The party must have been a large one, for while they forced in the hall-door, the haggard and the stables were seen in a blaze. Poor George had just retired to bed, a little later than usual, for his sons had returned a few hours before from Dublin, where they had been to attend their college examination. The villains, however, knew the house well, and made straight for his room. He was up in an instant, and, seizing a sabre that hung beside his bed, defended himself, with

the courage of desperation, against them all. The scuffle and the noise soon brought his sons to the spot, who, although mere boys, behaved in the most gallant manner. Overpowered at last by numbers, and covered with wounds, they dragged poor Tarleton down the stairs, shouting out as they went, 'bring him down to Freney's — let the bloody villain see the black walls and the cold hearth he has made before he dies.' It was their intention to murder him on the spot where, a few weeks before, a distress for rent had been executed against some of the tenants. He grasped the banisters with a despairing clutch, while fixing his eyes upon his servant who had lived with him for some years past, he called out to him in his agony to save him; but the fellow came deliberately forward and held the flame of a candle beneath the dying man's fingers, until he relaxed his hold and fell back among his murderers. Yes, yes, Father, Henry Tarleton saw it with his own eyes, for while his brother was stretched senseless on the floor, he was struggling with the others at the head of the staircase: and strange enough too, they never hurt the boys, but when they had wreaked their vengeance on the father, bound them back to back, and left them."

"Can they identify any of them?" said the priest, with intense emotion in his voice and manner.

"Scarcely, I fear; their faces were blackened and they wore shirts over their coats. Henry thinks he could swear to two or three of the number; but our best chance of discovery lies in the fact, that several of them were badly wounded, and one in particular, whom he saw cut down by his father's sabre, was carried down stairs by his comrades bathed in blood."

"He didn't recognise him?" said the priest eagerly.

"No; but here comes the poor boy, so I'll wish you good-morning."

He put spurs to his horse as he spoke and dashed forward, followed by the dragoons; while at the same moment, on the opposite side of the road, a young man — pale, with his dress disordered, his arm in a sling — rode by. He never turned a look aside; his filmy eye was fixed, as it were, on some far-off object, and he seemed scarce to guide his horse as he galloped onward over the rugged road.

The priest relaxed his pace to permit the crowd of horsemen to pass on, while his countenance once more assumed its drooping and despondent look, and he relapsed into his former silence.

"You see that high mountain to the left there," said he after a long pause. "Well, our road lies round the foot of it; and, please God, by to-morrow evening we'll be some five-and-twenty miles on the other side, in the heart of my own wild country, with the big mountains behind you, and the great blue Atlantic rearing its frothing waves at your feet." He stopped for an instant, and then grasping my arm with his strong hand continued in a low distinct voice: — "Never speak to me nor question me about what we saw last night, and try only to remember it as a dream. And now let me tell you how I intend to amuse you in the far west."

Here the priest began a spirited and interesting description of the scenery and the people — their habits, their superstitions, and their pastimes. Sustaining the interest of his account with legend and story — now grave, now gay; sometimes recalling a trait from the

older history of the land; sometimes detailing an incident of the fair or the market, but always by his wonderful knowledge of the peasantry, their modes of thinking and reasoning, and by his imitation of their figurative and forcible expressions, able to carry me with him whether he took the mountain's side for his path — sat beside some cotter's turf-fire — or skimmed along the surface of the summer sea in the frail bark of an Achill fisherman.

I learnt from him that in the wild region where he lived, there were above fifteen thousand persons, scarce one of whom could speak or understand a word of English. Of these he was not only the priest, but the ruler and the judge. Before him all their disputes were settled — all their differences reconciled. His word, in the strongest sense of the phrase, was a law — not indeed to be enforced by bayonets and policemen, by constables and sheriffs' officers — but one which in its moral force demanded obedience, and would have made him who resisted it an outcast among his fellows.

"We are poor," said the priest, "but we are happy. Crime is unknown amongst us, and the blood of man has not been shed in strife for fifty years within the barony. When will ye learn this in England? When will ye know that these people may be led but never driven — that they may be persuaded but never compelled? When will ye condescend to bend so far the prerogative of your birth, your riches, and your rank, as to reason with the poor and humble peasant that looks up to you for protection? Alas, my young friend, were you to ask me what is the great source of misery of this unhappy land, I should tell you, the superior

intelligence of its people. I see a smile, but hear me out. Unlike the peasantry of other countries they are not content. Their characters are mistaken, their traits misconstrued — partly from indifference, partly from prejudice, and in a great measure because it is the fashion to recognise in the tiller of the soil a mere drudge, with scarce more intelligence than the cattle in his plough, or the oxen in his team; but here you have a people quick, sharp-sighted, and intelligent, able to scan your motives with ten times the accuracy you can guess at theirs; suspicious, because their credulity has been abused; revengeful, because their wild nature knows no other vindicator than their own right arm; lawless, for they look upon your institutions as the sources of their misery and the instruments of your tyranny towards them; reckless, for they have nothing to lose; indolent, for they have nothing to gain. Without an effort to win their confidence or secure their good-will, you overwhelm them with institutions — cumbrous, complicated, and unsuitable; and while you neglect or despise all appeal to their feelings or affections, you place your faith in your soldiery or a special commission. Heaven help you! you may thin them off by the gallows and transportation, but the root of the evil is as far from you as ever. You do not know them — you will not know them: more prone to punish than prevent, you are satisfied with the working of the law, and not shocked with the accumulation of crime: and when broken by poverty and paralysed by famine, a gloomy desolation spreads over the land, you meet in terms of congratulation to talk over tranquillized Ireland.”

In this strain did the good priest continue to de-

velop his views concerning his country; the pivot of his argument being, that to a people so essentially different in every respect, English institutions and English laws were inadequate and unsuitable. Sometimes I could not only follow, but agree with him. At others, I could but dimly perceive his meaning and dissent from the very little I could catch. Enough of this, however. In a biography so flimsy as mine, politics would play but an unseemly part; and even were it otherwise, my opportunities were too few, and my own incapacity too great to make my opinions of any value, on a subject so complicated and so vast. Still the topic served to shorten the road, and when, towards evening, we found ourselves in the comfortable parlour of the little inn at Ballyhocsousth, * so far had we both regained our spirits that once more the priest's jovial good humour irradiated his happy countenance, and I myself, hourly improving in health and strength, felt already the bracing influence of the mountain air, and that strong sense of liberty, never more thoroughly appreciated than when regaining vigour after the sufferings of a sick bed.

We were seated by an open window looking out upon the landscape. It was past sunset, and the tall shadows of the mountains were meeting across the lake, like spirits who waited for the night-hour to interchange their embraces. A thin pale crescent of a new moon marked the blue sky but did not dim the lustre of the thousand stars that glittered round it. All was hushed and still, save the deep note of the rail, or the measured plash of oars heard from a long distance.

* *Anglicé* — Town of the Fight of Flails.

The rich meadows that sloped down to the water sent up their delicious odours in the balmy air, and there stole over the senses a kind of calm and peaceful pleasure that such a scene at such an hour can alone impart.

"This is beautiful — this is very beautiful, father," said I.

"So it is, Sir," said the priest. "Let no Irishman wander for scenery: he has as much right to go travel in search of wit and good fellowship. We don't want for blessings. All we need is, to know how to enjoy them. And believe me, there is a plentiful feast on the table if gentlemen would only pass down the dishes. And now, that reminds me — what are you drinking? — *negus*. I wouldn't wish it to my greatest enemy. But to be sure, I am always forgetting you are not one of ourselves. There, reach me over that square decanter. It wouldn't have been so full now if we had had poor Bob here — poor fellow: but one thing is certain, wherever he is, he is happy. I believe I never told you how he got into his present scrape."

"No, father; and that's precisely the very thing I wish to ask you."

"You shall hear it, and it isn't a bad story in its way: but don't you think the night air is a little too much for you — shall we close the window?"

"If it depend on me, father, pray leave it open."

"Ha, ha, I was forgetting again," said the old fellow, laughing roguishly, "*stella sunt amantium oculi*, as Pharis says. There now, don't be blushing, but listen to me.

"It was somewhere about last November that Bob got a quiet hint from some one at Daly's that the

sooner he got out of Dublin the more conducive it would be to his personal freedom, as various writs were flying about the capital after him. He took the hint, and set off the same night, and reached his beautiful chateau of Newgate without let or molestation — which having victualled for the winter, he could, if necessary, sustain a reasonable siege against any force the law was likely to bring up. The house had an abundant supply of arms — there were guns that figured in '41, pikes that had done good service a little later, swords of every shape — from the two-handed weapon of the twelfth century, to a Roman pattern made out of a scythe by a smith in the neighbourhood; but the grand terror of the country was an old four-pounder of Cromwell's time, that the major had mounted on the roof, and whose effects, if only proportionately injurious to the enemy to the results nearer home, must indeed have been a formidable engine; for the only time it was fired — I believe to celebrate Bob's birth-day — it knocked down a chimney with the recoil, blew the gardener and another man about ten feet into the air, and hurled Bob himself through a skylight into the housekeeper's room. No matter for that, it had a great effect in raising the confidence of the country people, some of whom verily believed that the ball was rolling for a week after.

“Bob, I say, victualled the fortress, but he did more — for he assembled all the tenants, and in a short but pithy speech he told them the state of his affairs, explaining with considerable eloquence what a misfortune it would be for them if by any chance they were to lose him for a landlord.

“‘See now, boys,’ said he, ‘there’s no knowing

what misfortune wouldn't happen ye; they'd put a receiver on the property — a spalpeen with bailiffs and constables after him — that would be making you pay up the rent — and faith I wouldn't say but maybe he'd ask you for the arrears.'

"'Oh, murther, murther! did any one ever hear the like,' the people cried on every side, and Bob, like a clever orator, continued to picture forth additional miseries and misfortunes to them, if such a calamitous event were to happen, explaining at the same time the contemptible nature of the persecution practised against him.

"'No, boys,' cried he, 'there isn't a man among them all that has the courage to come down and ask for his money, face to face, but they set up a pair of fellows they call John Doe and Richard Roe — there's names for you. Did you ever hear of a gentleman in the county with names like that? but that's not the worst of it, for you see even these two chaps can't be found. It's truth I'm telling you, and some people go so far as to say that there is no such people at all, and it's only a way they have to worry and annoy country gentlemen with what they call a fiction of the law; and my own notion is, that the law is nothing but lies and fiction from beginning to end.'

"A very loud cheer from Bob's audience proclaimed how perfectly they coincided in his opinion; and a keg of whiskey being brought into the lawn, each man drained a glass to his health, uttering at the same time a determination with respect to the law officers of the crown, that boded but little happiness to them when they made a tour in the neighbourhood.

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drawing home; that 's, you understand, what we call in Ireland, bringing in the harvest; and sure enough, the farm-yard presented a very comely sight, with ricks of hay, and stacks of corn, and oats, and barley, and out-houses full of potatoes, and in fact every thing the country produces, besides cows and horses, sheep, pigs, goats, and even turkeys, for most of the tenants paid their rents in kind, and as Bob was an easy landlord, very few came without a little present — a game-cock, a jack-ass, a ram, or some amusing beast or other. Well, the next day — it was a fine dry day with a light frost, and as the bog was hard, Bob sent them all away to bring in the turf. Why then, but it is a beautiful sight, captain, and I wish you saw it; maybe two or three hundred cars all going as fast as they can pelt, on a fine bright day with a blue sky and a sharp air, the boys standing up in the kishes driving without rein or halter — always at a gallop — for all the world like Ajax, Ulysses, and the rest of them that we read of; and the girls, as pretty creatures as ever you threw an eye upon, with their short red petticoats, and their hair plaited and fastened up at the back of their heads: on my conscience, the Trojan women was nothing to them. But to come back. Bob Mahon was coming home from the bog about five o'clock in the evening, cantering along on a little dun pony he had, thinking of nothing at all, except, maybe, the elegant rick of turf that he'd be bringing home in the morning, when what did he see before him but a troop of dragoons, and at their head old Basset, the sub-sheriff, and another fellow whose face he had often seen in the Four-courts of Dublin. 'By the mortal,' said Bob, 'I am done for;' for he

saw in a moment that Basset had waited until all the country people were employed at a distance to come over and take him. However, he was no ways discouraged, but brushing his way through the dragoons, he rode up beside Basset's gig, and taking a long pistol out of the holster, he began to examine the priming as cool as may be.

"How are you, Nick Basset?" said Bob; "and where are you going this evening?"

"How are you, major?" said Basset, with his eye all the while upon the pistol. "It is an unpleasant business — a mighty unpleasant business to me, Major Bob," says he; "but the truth is, there is an execution against you, and my friend here, Mr. Hennessy, — Mr. Hennessy — Major Mahon — asked me to come over with him, because as I knew you —"

"Well, well," said Bob, interrupting him. "Have you a writ against me — is it me you want?"

"Nothing of the kind, Major Mahon. God forbid we'd touch a hair of your head. It's just a kind of a capias, as I may say, nothing more."

"And why did you bring the dragoons with you?" said Bob, looking at him mighty hard.

"Basset looked very sheepish, and didn't know what to say, but Mahon soon relieved him —"

"Never mind, Nick, never mind, you can't help your trade; but how would you look if I was to raise the country on ye?"

"You wouldn't do the like, major — but surely if you did, the troops —"

"The troops!" said Bob: "God help you! we'd be twenty — ay, thirty to one. See now, if I give a whistle, this minute —"

“‘Don’t distress yourself, major,’ said Basset, ‘for the decent people are a good six miles off at the bog, and couldn’t hear you if you whistled ever so loud.’

“The moment he said this Bob saw that the old rogue was up to him, and he began to wonder within himself what was the best to be done.

“‘See now, Nick,’ said he, ‘it isn’t like a friend to bring up all these red coats here upon me, before my tenantry, disgracing me in the face of my people. Send them back to the town, and go up yourself with Mr. Hennessy there, and do whatever you have to do.’

“‘No, no,’ screamed Hennessy, ‘I’ll never part with the soldiers.’

“‘Very well,’ said Bob, ‘take your own way and see what will come of it.’

“He put spurs to his pony as he said this, and was just striking into the gallop, when Nick called out —

“‘Wait a bit, major, wait a bit. If we leave the dragoons where we are now, will you give us your word of honour not to hurt or molest us in the discharge of our duty, nor let any one else do so.’

“‘I will,’ said Bob, ‘now that you talk reasonably; I’ll treat you well.’

“After a little parley it was settled that part of the dragoons were to wait on the road, and the rest of them in the lawn before the house, while Nick and his friend were to go through the ceremony of seizing Bob’s effects, and make an inventory of every thing they could find.

“‘A mere matter of form, Major Mahon,’ said he: ‘we’ll make it as short as possible, and leave a couple

of men in possession; and as I know the affair will be arranged in a few days —'

"'Of course,' says Bob laughing; 'nothing easier. So come along now and let me show you the way.'

"When they reached the house Bob ordered up dinner at once, and behaved as politely as possible, telling them it was early and they would have plenty of time for every thing in the evening. But whether it was that they had no appetite just then, or that they were not over easy in their minds about Bob himself, they declined every thing, and began to set about their work. To it they went with pen and ink, putting down all the chairs and tables, the cracked china, and the fire-irons, and at last Bob left them counting over about twenty pairs of old top-boots that stood along the wall of his dressing-room.

"'Ned,' said Bob to his own man, 'get two big padlocks and put them on the door of the hay-loft as fast as you can.'

"'Sure it is empty, Sir,' said Ned; 'barrin' the rats, there's nothing in it.'

"'Don't I know that as well as you,' said Bob; 'but can't you do as you are bid, and when you've done it, take the pony and gallop over to the bog, and tell the people to throw the turf out of their carts and gallop up here as fast as they can.'

"He'd scarcely said it when Nick called out, 'Now, major, for the farm-yard if you please.' And so taking Hennessy's arm, he walked out, followed by the two big bailiffs, that never left them for a moment. To be sure it was a great sight when they got outside and saw all the ricks and stacks as thick as they could stand; and so they began counting and putting them

down on paper, and the devil a thing they forgot, not even the boneens and the bantams, and at last Nick fixed his eye upon the little door into the loft, upon which now two great big padlocks were hanging.

“‘I suppose it’s oats you have up there, major,’ said he.

“‘No, indeed,’ said Bob, looking a little confused.

“‘Maybe seed-potatoes,’ said Hennessy.

“‘Nor it neither,’ said he.

“‘Barley, it’s likely,’ cried Nick; ‘it is a fine dry loft.’

“‘No,’ said Bob, ‘it is empty.’

“And with that he endeavoured to turn them away and get them back into the house; but old Basset turned back, and fixing his eye upon the door, shook his head for a couple of minutes.

“‘Well,’ said he, ‘for an empty loft it has the finest pair of padlocks I ever looked at. Would there be any objection, major, to our taking a peep into it?’

“‘None,’ said Bob; ‘but I haven’t a ladder that long in the place.’

“‘I think this might reach,’ said Hennessy, as he touched one with his foot that lay close along the wall, partly covered with straw.

“‘Just the thing,’ said Nick; while poor Bob hung down his head and said nothing. With that they raised the ladder and placed it against the door.

“‘Might I trouble you for the key, Major Mahon,’ said Hennessy.

“‘I believe it is mislaid,’ said Bob, in a kind of sulky way, at which they both grinned at each other, much as to say we have him now.

“‘You ’ll not take it amiss then, major, if we break the door,’ said Nick.

“‘You may break it, and be hanged,’ said Bob, as he stuck his hands into his pockets and walked away.

“‘This will do,’ cried one of the bailiffs, taking up a big stone as he mounted the ladder, followed by Nick, Hennessy, and the other.

“It took some time to smash the locks, for they were both strong ones, and all the while Nick and his friend were talking together in great glee, but poor Bob stood by himself against a hay-rick, looking as melancholy as might be. At last the locks gave way and down went the door with a bang. The bailiffs stepped in, and then Nick and the others followed. It took them a couple of minutes to satisfy themselves that the loft was quite empty, but when they came back again to the door what was their surprise to discover that Bob was carrying away the ladder upon his shoulders to a distant part of the yard.

“‘Holloa, major,’ cried Basset, ‘don’t forget us up here.’

“‘Devil a fear of that,’ said Bob, ‘few that know you ever forget you.’

“‘We are quite satisfied, Sir,’ said Hennessy, ‘what you said was perfectly correct.’

“‘And why didn’t you believe it before, Mr. Hennessy? You see what you have brought upon yourself.’

“‘You are not going to leave us up here, Sir,’ cried Hennessy: ‘will you venture upon false imprisonment.’

“‘I’d venture on more than that, if it were needful; but see now, when you get back don’t be pretend-

ing that I didn't offer to treat you well — little as you deserved it. I asked you to dinner, and would have given you your skin full of wine afterwards, but you preferred your own dirty calling, and so take the consequences.'

"While he was speaking a great cheer was heard, and all the country people came galloping into the yard with their turf cars.

"'Be alive now, my boys,' cried Bob. 'How many cars have you?'

"'Seventy, Sir, here, but there is more coming.'

"'That 'ill do,' said he: 'so now set to work and carry away all the oats, and the wheat, the hay, barley, and potatoes; let some of you take the calves and the pigs, and drive the bullocks over the mountain to Mr. Bodkin's; don't leave a turkey behind you, boys, and make haste for these gentlemen have so many engagements I can scarcely prevail on them to pass more than a day or two amongst us.'

"Bob pointed as he spoke to the four figures that stood trembling at the hay-loft door. A loud cheer, and a roar of laughter to the full as loud, answered his speech; and at the same moment to it they went, loading their cars with the harvest or the live stock as fast as they could; to be sure, such a scene was never witnessed — the cows bleating, pigs grunting, fowl cackling, men and women all running here and there, laughing like mad, and Nick Basset himself swearing like a trooper the whole time that he'd have them all hanged at the next assizes. Would you believe, the harvest it took nearly three weeks to bring home, was carried away that night and scattered all over the country at different farms where it never could be

traced, all the cattle too were taken away, and before sunrise there wasn't as much as a sheep or a lamb left to bleat on the lawn.

"The next day Bob set out on a visit to a friend at some distance, leaving directions with his people to liberate the gentlemen in the hay-loft in the course of the afternoon. The story made a great noise in the country, but before people were tired laughing at it an action was entered against Bob for false imprisonment, and heavy damages awarded against him: so that you may see there was a kind of poetic justice in the manner of his capture, for after all it was only trick for trick."

The worthy priest now paused to mix another tumbler, which, when he had stirred and tasted and stirred again, he pushed gently before him on the table, and seemed lost in reverie.

"Yes," said he half aloud, "it is a droll country we live in, and there's not one of us doesn't waste more ingenuity and display more cunning in getting rid of his fortune, than the cleverest fellows elsewhere evince in accumulating theirs. But you are looking a little pale, I think: these late hours won't suit you, so I'll just send you to bed."

I felt the whole force of my kind friend's advice, and yielding obedience at once, I shook him by the hand and wished him good night.

CHAPTER VIII.

Murranakilty.

IF my kind reader is not already tired of the mountain-road and the wild west, may I ask him — dare I say her? — to accompany me a little farther, while I present another picture of its life.

You see that bold mountain, jagged and rugged in outline, like the spine of some gigantic beast, that runs far out into the Atlantic, and ends in a bold, abrupt headland, against which the waves, from the very coast of Labrador are beating without one intervening rock to break their force. Carry your eye along its base, to where you can mark a little clump of alder and beech, with here and there a taper poplar interspersed, and see if you cannot detect the gable of a long, low, thatched house, that lies almost buried in the foliage. Before the door a little patch of green stretches down to the shore, where a sandy beach, glowing in all the richness of a morning sun, glitters with many a shell and brilliant pebble, — that, then, is Murranakilty. But approach, I beg you, a little nearer; let me suppose that you have traced the winding of that little bay, crossing the wooden bridge over the bright trout stream, as it hastens on to mingle its waters with the ocean; you have climbed over the rude stile, and stopped for an instant to look into the holy well, in whose glassy surface the little wooden crucifix above is dimly shadowed, and, at length, you stand upon the lawn before the cottage. What a glorious scene is now before you! On the opposite side of the bay, the mountain, whose summit is lost among the clouds, seems as it were cleft by some

earthquake's force, and through its narrow gorge you can trace the blue water of the sea passing in, while each side of the valley is clothed with wood. The oak of a hundred years, here sheltered from the rude wind of the Atlantic, spreads its luxuriant arms, while the frothy waves are breaking at its feet. High, however, above their tops you may mark the irregular outline of a large building, with battlements and towers, and massive walls, and one tall and loop-holed turret, that rises high into the air, and around whose summit the noisy rooks are circling in their flight. That is Kilmorran Castle, the residence of Sir Simon Bellew. There, for centuries past, his ancestors were born and died; there, in the midst of that wild and desolate grandeur, the haughty descendants of an ancient house lived on from youth to age, surrounded by all the observances of feudal state, and lording it far and near, for many a mile, with a sway and power that would seem to have long since passed away.

You carry your eye seaward, and I perceive your attention is fixed upon the small schooner that lies anchored in the offing; her topsail is in the clews, and flaps lazily against the mast, as she rolls and pitches in the breaking surge. The rake of her low masts, and the long boom that stretches out far beyond her taffrail, have, you deem it, a somewhat suspicious look; and you are right. She is *La Belle Louise*, a smuggling craft from Dieppe, whose crew, half French, half Irish, would fight her to the gunwale, and sink with, but never surrender her. You hear the plash of oars, and there now you can mark the eight-oared gig springing to the stroke, as it shoots from the shore, and heads out to sea. — Sir Simon loves claret, and,

like a true old Irish gentleman, he drinks it from the wood; there may, therefore, be some reason why those wild-looking red caps have pulled in shore. But now I'll ask you to turn to an humbler scene, and look within that room where the window, opened to the ground, is bordered by blossoming honeysuckle — it is the priest's parlour. At a little, breakfast-table, whose spotless cloth, and neat but simple equipage has a look of propriety and comfort, is seated one, whose gorgeous dressing-gown and lounging attitude, seems strangely at variance with the humble objects around him. He seems endeavouring to read a newspaper, which, ever and anon, he lays down beside him, and turns his eyes in the direction of the fire. For, although it is July, yet a keen freshness of the morning air makes the blazing turf by no means objectionable. He looks towards the fire, perhaps, you would say, lost in his own thoughts and musings; but no, truth must out, and his attention is occupied in a very different way. Kneeling before the fire is a young and lovely country-girl, engaged in toasting a muffin for the priest's breakfast; her features are flushed, partly with shame, partly with heat; and as now and then she throws back her long hair from her face with an impatient toss of her head, she steals a glance at the stranger, from a pair of eyes so deeply blue, that, at first, you were unjust enough to think them black. Her dress is a low boddice, and a short skirt of that brilliant dye, the Irish peasant of the west seems to possess the secret for. The jupe is short, I say, and so much the better for you, as it displays a pair of legs which, bare of shoe or stocking, are perfect in

their symmetry — the rounded instep and the swelling ankle chiselled as cleanly as a statue of Canova.

And now, my good reader, having shown you all this, let me proceed with my narrative.

“And sure now, Sir, wouldn’t it be better for you, and you sickly, to be eating your breakfast, and not be waiting for Father Tom; — maybe he wouldn’t come in this hour yet.”

“No, thank you, Mary; I had rather wait. I hope you are not so tired of my company that you want an excuse to get away?”

“Ah be asy now, if you plaze, Sir! It’s myself that’s proud to be talking to you.” And as she spoke she turned a pair of blue eyes upon me, with such a look that I could not help thinking if the gentlemen of the west be exposed to such, their blood is not as hot as is reputed. I suppose I looked as much, for she blushed deeply, and, calling out, “Here’s Father Tom!” sprang to her legs, and hurried from the room.

“Where are you scampering that way?” cried the good priest, as he passed her in the hall. “Ah, captain! — captain, behave yourself!”

“I protest, father —” cried I.

“To be sure you do! — Why wouldn’t you protest! But see now, it was your business brought me out this morning. Hand me over the eggs; I am as hungry as a hawk. The devil is in that girl — they are as hard as bullets! I see how it was, plain enough. It’s little she was thinking of the same eggs. Well, well! this is an ungrateful world; and only think of me, all I was doing for you.”

“My dear father, you are quite wrong —”

“No matter. Another slice of bacon. And, after

all, who knows if I have the worst of it. Do you know, now, that Miss Bellew has about the softest cheek —”

“What the devil do you mean?” said I, reddening.

“Why just that I was saluting her, *à la Française*, this morning; and I never saw her look handsomer in my life. It was scarce seven o’clock when I was over at Kilmorran, but early as it was, I caught her making breakfast for me, and, father and priest that I am, I couldn’t help feeling in love with her. It was a beautiful sight just to watch her light step and graceful figure moving about the parlour — now opening the window to let in the fresh air of the morning; now arranging a bouquet of moss-roses; now busying herself among the breakfast things, and all the while stealing a glance at Sir Simon, to see if he were pleased with what she was doing. He’ll be over here by-and-by, to call on you; and, indeed, it is an attention he seldom pays any one, for latterly, poor fellow, he is not over satisfied with the world; and if the truth were told, he has not had too much cause to be so.”

“You mentioned to him, then, that I was here?”

“To be sure I did; and the doing so cost me a scalded finger, for Miss Louisa, who was pouring out my tea at the moment, gave a jerk with her hand, and spilt the boiling water all over me. — Bad cess to you, Mary, but you’ve spoiled the toast this morning! half of it never saw the fire, and the other half is as black as my boot. — But, as I was saying, Sir Simon knows all about you, and is coming over to ask us to dine there; — though I offered to give the invitation myself, and accept it first; but he is very punctilious about

these things, and wouldn't hear of any thing but doing it in the regular way."

"Did he allude to Mr. Ulick Burke's affair?"

"Not a word. And even when I wished to touch on it, for the sake of a little explanation, he adroitly turned the subject, and spoke of something else. But it is drawing late, and I have some people to see this morning, so come along now into my little library here, and I'll leave you for a while to amuse yourself."

The priest led me, as he spoke, into a small room, whose walls were covered with books from the floor to the ceiling; even the very door by which we entered had its shelves, like the rest, so that when once in, you could see no trace of it. A single window looked seaward, towards the wide Atlantic, and presented a view of many miles of coast, indented with headland and promontory. Beneath, upon the placid sea, was a whole fleet of fishing boats, the crews of which were busily engaged in collecting the sea-weed to manure the land. The sight was both curious and picturesque. The light boats, tossing on the heavy swell, were crowded with figures whose attitudes evinced all the eagerness of a chase. Sometimes an amicable contest would arise between two parties, as their boat-hooks were fixed in the same mass of tangled weed. Sometimes two rival crews would be seen stretching upon their oars, as they headed out to sea, in search of a new prize: the merry voices, and the loud laughter, however, that rose above all other sounds, told that good humour and good will never deserted them in all the ardour of the contest.

Long after the priest left me, I continued to watch them. At last I set myself to explore the good father's

shelves, which I found, for the most part, were filled with portly tomes of divinity and polemics, huge folio copies of St. Augustine, Origen, Eusebius, and others; innumerable volumes of learned tractates on disputed points in theology; none of which possessed any interest for me. In one corner, however, beside the fire, whose convenience to the habitual seat of Father Tom argued that they were not least in favour with his reverence, was an admirable collection of the French dramatists, Molière, Beaumarchais, Racine, and several more; these were a real treat; and seating myself beside the window, I prepared, for about the twentieth time in my life, to read "*La Folle Journée*."

I had scarcely got to the end of the second act, when the door was gently opened, and Mary made her appearance; not in the dishabille of the morning, however, but with a trim cotton gown, and smart shoes and stockings; her hair, too, was neatly dressed, in the country fashion; yet still I was more than half disposed to think she looked even better in her morning costume.

The critical scrutiny of my glance had evidently disconcerted her, and made her, for the moment, forget the object of her coming. She looked down and blushed; she fiddled with the corner of her apron, and at last, recollecting herself, she dropped a little curtesy, and, opening the door wide, announced Sir Simon Bellew.

"Mr. Hinton, I believe," said Sir Simon, with a slight smile, as he bowed himself into the apartment; "will you allow me to introduce myself — Sir Simon Bellew."

The baronet was a tall, thin, meagre-looking old man, somewhat stooped by age, but preserving, both

in look and gesture, not only the remains of good looks, but the evident traces of one habituated to the world. His dress was very plain, but the scrupulous exactitude of his powdered cue, and the massive gold-headed cane he carried, showed he had not abandoned those marks of his position, so distinctive of rank in those days. He wore, also, large and handsome buckles in his shoes, but, in every other particular, his costume was simplicity itself.

Conversing with an ease which evinced his acquaintance with all the forms of society; he touched shortly upon my former acquaintance with his daughter, and acknowledged in terms slight, but suitable, how she had spoken of me. His manner was, however, less marked by every thing I had deemed to be Irish than that of any other person I had met with in the country; for, while he expressed his pleasure at my visit to the west, and invited me to pass some days at his house, his manner of doing so had nothing whatever of the warmth and *empressement* I had so often seen. In fact, save a slight difference in accent, it was as English as need be.

Whether I felt disappointed at this, or whether I had, myself, adopted the habits and prejudices of the land, I am unable to say, but certainly I felt chilled and repulsed; and, although our interview scarce lasted twenty minutes, was delighted when he rose to take his leave, and say, Good morning.

“You are good enough, then, to promise you’ll dine with us to-morrow, Mr. Hinton. I need scarcely remark, I can have no party to meet you, for this wild neighbourhood has denied us that; but as I am aware that your visit to the west is less for society than

scenery, perhaps I may assure you, you will not be disappointed. So now, *au revoir*." Sir Simon bowed deeply as he spoke, and, with a wave of his hat that would have done honour to the court of Louis XV. he took his leave and departed.

I followed him with my eye, as mounted on his old gray pony, he ambled quietly down the little path that led to the shore. Albeit an old man, his seat was firm, and not without a certain air of self-possession and ease; and as he returned the salutations of the passing country people, he did so with the quiet dignity of one who felt he conveyed an honour even in the recognition. There was something singular in the contrast of that venerable figure with the wild grandeur of the scene; and as I gazed after him, it set me thinking on the strange vicissitudes of life that must have made such as he pass his days in the dreary solitude of these mountains.

CHAPTER IX.

Sir Simon.

MY journey had so far fatigued me that I wasn't sorry to have a day of rest; and, as Father Tom spent the greater part of it from home, I was left to myself and my own reflections. The situation in which I found myself was singular enough — the guest of a man whose acquaintance I had made by chance, and who knowing as little of me as I did of him, yet showed by many an act of kindness, not less than by many a chance observation, a deep interest in myself and my fortunes. Here, then, I was; far from the sphere of my duties, neglecting the career I had adopted, and suffering days — weeks, to pass over without bestowing

a thought upon my soldier's life. Following on this train of thought, I could not help acknowledging to myself that my attachment to Miss Bellew was the cause of my journey, and the real reason of my wandering. However sanguine may be the heart when touched by the first passion, the doubts that will now and then shoot across it are painful and poignant; and now, in the calmness of my judgment, I could not but see the innumerable obstacles my family would raise to all my hopes. I well knew my father's predilection for a campaigning life, and that nothing would compensate to him for the defeat of this expectation: I had but too many proofs of my mother's aristocratic prejudices to suppose that she ever could acknowledge as her daughter-in-law, one, whose pretensions to rank although higher than her own, were yet neither trumpeted by the world nor blazoned by fashion; and lastly, changed as I was myself since my arrival in Ireland, there was yet enough of the Englishman left in me to see how unsuited was Louisa Bellew, in many respects, to be launched forth in the torrent of London life, while yet her experience of the world was so narrow and limited. Still, I loved her. The very artless simplicity of her manner, the untutored freshness of her mind had taught me to know, that even great personal attractions may be the second excellence of a woman. And besides, I was just at that time of life when ambition is least natural. One deems it more heroic to renounce all that is daring in enterprise, all that is great in promise, merely to be loved. My mind was therefore made up. The present opportunity was a good one to see her frequently and learn thoroughly to know her tastes and her dispositions. Should I succeed in gaining her

affections, however opposed my family might prove at first, I calculated on their fondness for me, as an only son, and knew that in regard to fortune, I should be independent enough to marry whom I pleased.

In speculations such as these the time passed over; and although I waited with impatience for the hour of our visit to Kilmorran Castle, still, as the time drew near many a passing doubt would flit across me, how far I had mistaken the promptings of my own affection for any return of my love. True it was, that more than once her look and manner testified I was not indifferent to her; still, when I remembered that I had ever seen her surrounded by persons she was anxious to avoid, a suspicion crossed me, that perhaps I owed the little preference she showed me, less to any qualities I possessed, than to my own unobtrusiveness. These were galling and unpleasant reflections; and whither they might have led me I know not, when the priest tapped with his knuckles at my window, and called out —

“Captain, we shall be late if you don’t hurry a bit; and I had rather be behind time with his gracious majesty himself than with old Sir Simon.”

I opened the window at once, and jumped out into the lawn.

“My dear father, I’ve been ready this half hour, but fell into a dreamy fit and forgot every thing. Are we to walk it?”

“No, no; the distance is much greater than you think. Small as the bay looks, it is a good three miles from this to Kilmorran; but here comes your old friend the curriculus.”

I once more mounted to my old seat, and the priest, guiding the horse down to the beach, selected the strand, from which the waves had just receded, as the hardest road, and pressed on at a pace that showed his desire to be punctual.

“Get along there! Nabocklish! How lazy the devil is;—faith, we’ll be late, do our best. Captain, darling, put your watch back a quarter of an hour, and I’ll stand to it that we are both by Dublin time.”

“Is he, then, so very particular,” said I, “as all that comes to?”

“Particular, is it? Faith he is. Why, man, there is as much ringing of bells before dinner in that house, as if every room in it was crammed with company. And the old butler will be there, all in black, and his hair powdered, and beautiful silk stockings on his legs, every day in the week, although, maybe, it is a brace of snipe will be all that is on the table. Take the whip for a while, and lay into that baste,—my heart is broke flogging him.”

Had Sir Simon only watched the good priest’s exertions for the preceding quarter of an hour, he certainly would have had a hard heart, if he had criticised his punctuality. Shouting one moment—cursing the next—thrashing away with his whip, and betimes striding over the splash-board to give a kick with his foot, he undoubtedly spared nothing in either voice or gesture.

“There!—glory be to God!” cried he at last, as he turned sharp from the shady road into a narrow avenue of tall lime-trees; “take the reins, captain, till I wipe my face. Blessed hour, look at the state I am in! Lift him to it, and don’t spare him. May I never,

— if that isn't the last bell, and he only gives five minutes after that."

Although I certainly should have preferred that Father Tom had continued his functions as charioteer, now that we were approaching the house, common humanity however compelled me to spare him, and I flogged and chucked the old beast with all my might up the rising ground towards the house.

I had but just time to see that the building before us was a large embattled structure, which, although irregular, and occasionally incongruous in detail, was yet a fine specimen of the castellated Gothic of the seventeenth century. Massive square towers flanked the angles, themselves surmounted by smaller turrets, that shot up into the air high above the dark woods around them. The whole was surrounded by a fosse, now dry, and overgrown with weeds; but the terrace, which lay between this and the castle, was laid out as a flower-garden, with a degree of taste and beauty that, to my mind at least, bespoke the fostering hand of Louisa Bellew. Upon this the windows of a large drawing-room opened, at one of which I could mark the tall and stately figure of Sir Simon, as he stood, watch in hand, awaiting our arrival. I confess, it was not without a sense of shame that I continued my flagellations at the moment. Under any circumstances, our turn-out was not quite unexceptionable; but, when I thought of my own position, and of the good priest who sat beside me, mopping his head and face with a huge red cotton handkerchief, I cursed my stars for the absurd exposure. Just at this instant the skirt of a white robe passed one of the windows, and I thought

— I hope it was but a thought — I heard a sound of laughter.

“There — that will do. Phœbus himself couldn’t do it better. I wouldn’t wish my worst enemy to be in a pair of shafts before you.”

Muttering a curse on the confounded beast, I pulled short up and sprung out.

“Not late, Nicholas, I hope?” said the priest to a tall, thin, old butler, who bore a most absurd resemblance to his master.

“Your reverence has a minute and a-half yet; but the soup’s on the table.” As he spoke, he drew from his pocket a small bit of looking-glass, in a wooden frame, and, with a pocket-comb arranged his hair in the most orderly and decorous manner; which being done, he turned gravely round and said: — “Are ye ready, now, gentlemen?”

The priest nodded, and forward we went. Passing through a suite of rooms whose furniture, however handsome once, was now worm-eaten and injured by time, we at length reached the door of the drawing-room, when the butler, after throwing one more glance at us, to assure himself that we were in presentable array, flung the door wide open, and announced, with the voice of a king at arms —

“The Reverend Father Loftus and Mr. Hinton.”

“Serve!” said Sir Simon, with a wave of his hand. While, advancing towards us, he received us with most polished courtesy.

“You are most welcome to Kilmorran, Mr. Hinton. I need not present my daughter.”

He turned towards the priest, and the same moment I held Miss Bellew’s hand in mine. Dressed in white,

and with her hair plainly braided on her cheek, I thought she looked handsomer than I had ever seen her. There was an air of assured calmness in her manner, that sat well upon her lovely features, as, with a tone of winning sweetness, she seconded the words of her father, and welcomed me to Kilmorran.

The first step in the knowledge of the female heart is, to know how to interpret any constraint or reserve of manner on the part of the woman you are in love with. Your mere novice is never more tempted to despair than at the precise moment his hopes should grow stronger; nor is he ever so sanguine as when the prospect is gloomy before him. The quick perceptions of even a very young girl, enable her to perceive when she is loved; and however disposed she may feel towards the individual, a certain mixture of womanly pride and coquetry will teach her a kind of reserve towards him.

Now, there was a slight dash of this constrained tone through Miss Bellew's manner to me, and little experience as I had had in such matters, I knew enough to augur favourably from it. While doing the honours of her house, a passing timidity would seem, every now and then, to check her advances, and I could remark how carefully she avoided any allusion, however slight, to our past acquaintance.

The austerity of Sir Simon's manner, at his first visit, as well as the remarks of my friend the priest, had led me to suspect that our dinner-party would prove cold, formal, and uncomfortable. Indeed, the baronet's constrained and measured courtesy in the drawing-room, gave me but little encouragement to expect any thing better. Most agreeable, therefore,

was my disappointment to find, that before the soup was removed he had thawed considerably. The stern wrinkles of his haughty face relaxed, and a bland and good-humoured smile had usurped the place of his former fixed and determined look. Doing the honours of his table with the most perfect tact, he contrived, while almost monopolizing the conversation, to appear the least obtrusive amongst us; his remarks being ever accompanied by some appeal to his daughter, the priest, or myself, seemed to link us in the interest of all he said, and make his very listeners deem themselves entertaining and agreeable.

Unfortunately, I can present but a very meagre picture of this happy gift, but I remember well how insensibly my prejudices gave way, one by one, as I listened to his anecdotes, and heard him recount, with admirable humour, many a story of his early career. To be sure, it may be said that my criticism was not likely to be severe, while seated beside his beautiful daughter, whose cheek glowed with pleasure, and whose bright eye glistened with added lustre as she remarked the impression her father's agreeability was making on his guests. Such may, I doubt not, have increased the delight I felt; but Sir Simon's own claims were still indisputable.

I know not how far I shall meet my reader's concurrence in the remark, but it appears to me that conversational talent, like wine, requires age to make it mellow. The racy flavour that smacks of long knowledge of life — the reflective tone that deepens without darkening the picture — the freedom from exaggeration, either in praise or censure, are not the gifts of young men usually; and certainly they do season the inter-

course of older ones, greatly to its advantage. There is, moreover, a pleasant flattery in listening to the narratives of those who were mixing with the busy world — its intrigues, its battles, and its by-play, while we were but boys. How we like to hear of the social everyday life of those great men of a by-gone day, whose names have become already historical — what a charm does it lend to reminiscence, when the names of Burke, Sheridan, Grattan, and Curran, start up amid memories of youthful pleasure — and how we treasure every passing word that is transmitted to us, and how much, in spite of all the glorious successes of their after days, do we picture them to ourselves, from some slight or shadowy trait of their school or college life.

Sir Simon Bellew's conversation abounded in features of this kind. His career had begun and continued for a long time, in the brightest period of Ireland's history; when wealth and genius were rife in the land — and when the joyous traits of Irish character were elicited in all their force, by prosperity and happiness. It was then shone forth in all their brilliancy, the great spirits, whose flashing wit and glittering fancy have cast a sunlight over their native country, that even now, in the twilight of the past, continues to illumine it. Alas! they have had no heritors to their fame — they have left no successors behind them. I have said that Miss Bellew listened with delight to all her father's stores of amusement — happy to see him once more aroused to the exertion of his abilities — and pleased to watch how successfully his manner had won over us. With what added loveliness she looked up to him, as he narrated some circumstances of his political career,

where his importance with his party was briefly alluded to; and how proudly her features glowed, as some passing sentiment of high and simple patriotism would break from him. At such moments, the resemblance between them both became remarkably striking, and I deemed her even more beautiful, than when her face wore its habitual calm and peaceful expression.

Father Loftus himself seemed also to have undergone a change; no longer indulging in his accustomed free and easy manner, seasoning his conversation with droll allusions and sly jokes; he now appeared a shrewd, intelligent reasoner — a well-informed man of the world; and at times, evidenced traits of reading and scholarship I was nowise prepared for. But how vain is it for one of any other country to fathom one-half the depth of Irish character, or say what part is inapplicable to an Irishman? My own conviction is, that we are all mistaken in our estimate of them — that the gay and reckless spirit, the wild fun, and frantic, impetuous devilment, are their least remarkable features, and in fact only the outside emblem of the stirring nature within. Like the lightning, that flashes over the thunder-cloud, but neither influences the breaking of the storm, nor points to its course — so have I seen the jest break from lips pale with hunger, and heard the laugh come free and mellow when the heart was breaking in misery — but what a mockery of mirth!

When we retired to the drawing-room, Sir Simon, who had something to communicate to Father Tom, took him apart into one of the deep window recesses, and I was left for the first time alone beside Miss Bellew. There was something of awkwardness in the situation, for as neither of us could allude to the past

without evoking recollections we both shunned to touch on, we knew not well of what to speak. The window lay open to the ground, displaying before us a garden in all the richness of fruit and blossom — the clustering honeysuckle and the dog-rose, hung in masses of flower across the casement — and the graceful hyacinth and the deep carnation were bending to the night air, scented with the odour of many a flower. I looked wistfully without — she caught my glance — a slight hesitation followed — and then, as if assuming more courage, she said —

“Are you fond of a garden? — would you like to walk?”

The haste with which I caught at the proposal half disconcerted her; but, with a slight smile, she stepped out into the walk.

How I do like a large, old-fashioned garden, with its venerable fruit trees — its shady alleys — its overgrown and tangled beds in which the very luxuriance sets all effort of art at defiance, and where rank growth speaks of wildness rather than culture. I like those grassy walks, where the footstep falls unheard — those shady thickets of nut trees, which the blackbird haunts in security, and where the thrush sings undisturbed — what a sense of quiet home-happiness there breathes in the leafy darkness of the spot, and how meet for reverie and reflection does it seem!

As I sauntered along beside my companion, these thoughts crowded on me. Neither spoke — but her arm was in mine — our footsteps moved in unison — our eyes followed the same objects, and I felt as though our hearts beat responsively. On turning from one of the darker walks, we suddenly came upon an elevated

spot, from which, through an opening in the wood, the coast came into view, broken into many a rocky promontory, and dotted with small islands. The sea was calm and waveless, and stretched away towards the horizon in one mass of unbroken blue, where it blended with the sky. An exclamation of "How beautiful!" broke from me at once; and as I turned towards Louisa, I perceived that her eyes sparkled with pleasure, and a half blush was mantling her cheek.

"You are not, then, disappointed with the west?" said she, with animation.

"No, no. I did not look for any thing like this; nor," added I, in a lower tone, while the words trembled on my lips, "did I hope to enjoy it thus."

She seemed slightly confused; but, with woman's readiness to turn the meaning of my speech, added —

"Your recovery from illness doubtless gives a heightened pleasure to every thing like this — the dark hour of sickness, if often needed to teach us to feel strongly as we ought, the beauty of the fair world we live in."

"It may be so — but still I find that every sorrow leaves a scar upon the heart, and he who has mourned much loses the zest for happiness."

"Or rather, his views of it are different — I speak, happily for me, in ignorance; yet it seems as though every trial in life was a preparation for some higher scale of blissful enjoyment; and that as our understandings mature in power, so do our hearts in goodness — chastening at each ordeal of life, till, at the last, the final sorrow, death, bids us prepare for the eternity where there is no longer grief, and where the weary are at rest."

"Is not your view of life rather derived from the happy experience of this quiet spot than suited for the collisions of the world; where, as men grow older, their consciences grow more seared — their hearts less open."

"Perhaps — but is not my philosophy a good one that fits me for my station? — my life has been cast here; I have no wish to leave it — I hope I never shall."

"Never! Surely you would like to see other countries — to travel?"

"No, no. All the brilliant pleasures you can picture for me would never requite the fears I must suffer, lest these objects should grow less dear to me when I came back to them. The Tyrol is doubtless grander in its wild magnificence; but can it ever come home to my heart with so many affections and memories as these bold cliffs I have gazed on in my infancy; or should I benefit in happiness if it were? Can your Swiss peasant, be his costume ever so picturesque, interest me one half so much as yonder poor fisherman, who is carrying up his little child in his arms from the beach? I know him — his home — his hearth; I have seen his grateful smile for some small benefit, and heard his words of thankfulness; and think you not that such recollections as these are all mingled in every glance I throw around me, and that every sun-lit spot of landscape shines not more brightly in my heart for its human associations? These may be narrow prejudices — I see you smile at me."

"No, no. Trust me, I do not undervalue your reasons."

"Well, here comes Father Loftus, and he shall be judge between us. We were discussing the advantages of contrasting our home with other countries —"

"Ahem! A very difficult point," said the priest, interrupting her, and drawing himself up with a great air of judicial importance. "*Ubi bene, ibi patria*: which may be rendered, 'there's potatoes every where.' Not that I incline to the doctrine myself: Ireland is the only enjoyable country I know of. *Utamur creatura, dum possumus*: that means 'a moderate use of creature comforts,' Miss Louisa. But, troth, I'm so heated with an argument I had with Sir Simon, that I'm no ways competent — did I tell you he was waiting for his tea?"

"No, indeed you did not," said Miss Bellew, giving vent to a laugh she had been struggling against for the last few minutes; and which I did not at the moment know was caused by her perceiving the priest's air of chagrin and discontent, the evident proofs of his being worsted by the old baronet, whose chief pleasure in life was to worry the father into a discussion, and either confuse or confute him. "My father seems in such good spirits to-night. Don't you think so?" said she roguishly, looking over at the priest.

"Never saw him better; quite lively and animated, and" — dropping his voice to a whisper — "as obstinate as ever."

As we entered the house, we found Sir Simon walking leisurely up and down the drawing-room, with his hands behind his back, his face radiant with smiles, and his eye gleaming with conscious triumph towards the corner where the priest stood tumbling over some books to conceal his sense of defeat. In a few minutes

after we were seated round the tea-table, the little cloud was dispelled, and a happier party it were difficult to imagine.

CHAPTER X.

St. Senan's well.

How shall I trace this, the happiest period of my life! when days and weeks rolled on, and left no track behind, save in that delicious calm that stole over my senses gradually and imperceptibly. Each morning saw me on my way to Castle Bellew: the mountain-path that led up from the little strand was well worn by my footsteps — I knew its every turn and winding; scarcely a dog-rose bloomed along the way with which I had not grown familiar. And how each object spoke to my heart! — for I was happy! The clouds that moved above; the rippling tide that flowed beneath; the sunny shore; the shady thicket; — were all to me as though I had known them from boyhood. For so it is, in our glad moments we cling to all things that surround us; and giving to external nature the high colouring of our own hearts, we feel how beautiful is this world! Yet was my mind not all tranquil: for often, as I hastened on, some passing thought would shoot across me. Where is this to end? Can I hope ever to overcome the deep-rooted prejudices of my family, and induce them to receive amongst them as my wife, the beautiful and artless daughter of the wild west? or could I dare to expose her, on whom all my affections were centred, to the callous criticism of my fine lady-mother, and her fashionable friends in London? What right had I to stake her happiness on such a chance; — to take her from all the objects endeared

to her by taste, by time, by long-hallowed associations, and place her amid those among whom the very charm of her untarnished nature would have made her their inferior?

Is it that trait of rebellious spirit, that would seem to leaven every portion of our nature, which makes our love strongest when some powerful barrier has been opposed to our hopes and wishes? or is it rather, that in the difficulties and trials of life, we discover those deeper resources of our hearts, that under happier auspices had lain dormant and unknown? I scarcely know: but true it is, after such reflections as these, I ever hurried on the faster to meet her, more resolutely bent than ever, in weal or woe, to link my fortune with her own.

Though I returned each night to the priest's cottage, my days were entirely spent at Castle Bellew. How well do I remember every little incident that marked their tranquil course! The small breakfast-parlour, with its old Tudor window looking out upon the flower-garden: how often have I paced it, impatient for her coming; turning ever and anon to the opening door, when the old butler, with the invariable habitude of his kind, continually appeared with some portion of the breakfast equipage: how I started, as some distant door would shut or open — some far-off foot-step on the stair; and wonder within myself, why felt she not some of this impatient longing. And when, at last, tortured with anxiety and disappointment, I had turned away towards the window, the gentle step, the rustling dress, and, more than all, the indescribable something that tells us we are near those we love, bespoke her coming — oh! the transport of that

moment! With what a fervid glow of pleasure I sprang to meet her — to touch her hand — to look upon her! How rapidly, too, I endeavoured to speak my few words of greeting, lest her father's coming might interfere with even this short-lived period of happiness; and, after all, how little meaning were the words themselves, save in the tone I spoke them!

Then followed our rambles through the large but neglected garden, where the rich-blossoming fruit-tree scented the air, loaded with all the fragrance of many a wild flower. Now strolling onwards — silent, but full of thought, we trod some dark and shaded alley; now entering upon some open glade, where a view of the far-off mountains would break upon us, or where some chance vista showed the deep blue sunny sea swelling with sullen roar against the rocky coast.

How often, at such times as these, have I asked myself if I could look for greater happiness than thus to ramble on, turning from the stupendous majesty of Nature, to look into her eyes whose glance met mine so full of tender meaning; while words would pass between us, few and low-voiced, but all so thrilling — their very accent spoke of love. Yet, amid all this, some agonizing doubt would shoot across me, that my affection was not returned; the very frankness of her nature made me fear: and when we parted at night, and I held my homeward way towards the priest's cottage, I would stop from time to time, conning over every word she spoke, calling to mind each trivial circumstance; and if by accident some passing word of jest — some look of raillery, recurred to my memory, how have the warm tears rushed to my eyes, as with my heart full to bursting, I muttered to myself, "She

loves me not!" These fears would then give way to hope, as in my mind's eye she stood before me, all beaming in smiles: and amid these alternate emotions, I trod my lonely path, longing for the morrow, when we should meet again, when I vowed within my heart to end my life of doubt by asking if she loved me. But with that morrow came the same spell of happiness that lulled me; and like the gambler who had set his life upon the die, and durst not throw, so did I turn with trembling fear from tempting the chance that might in a moment dispel the bright dream of my existence, and leave life bleak and barren to me for ever.

The month of August was drawing to a close, as we sauntered one fine evening towards the sea-shore. There was a little path which wound down the side of a bold crag, partly by steps — partly by a kind of sloping way, defended at the sides by a rude wooden railing, which led down upon the beach exactly at the spot where a well of clear spring water sprung up, and tracked its tiny stream into the blue ocean. This little spring, which was always covered by the sea at high water, was restored, on the tide ebbing, to its former purity, and bubbled away as before; and from this cause had obtained from the simple peasantry the reputation of being miraculous, and was believed to possess innumerable properties of healing and consoling.

I had often heard of it, but never visited it before; and thither we now bent our steps, more intent upon catching the glorious sunset that was glowing on the Atlantic, than of testing the virtues of St. Senan's well — for so was it called. The evening — an autumnal

one — was calm and still; not a leaf stirred; the very birds were hushed; and there was all that solemn silence that sometimes threatens the outbreak of a storm. As we descended the crag, however, the deep booming of the sea broke upon us, and between the foliage of the oak trees we could mark the heavy rolling of the mighty tide, as wave after wave swelled on, and then was dashed in foam and spray upon the shore. There was something peculiarly grand and almost supernatural in the heavy swell of the great sea, rearing its white crest afar, and thundering along the weather-beaten rocks, when every thing else was calm and unmoved around: the deep and solemn roar, echoing from many a rocky cavern, rose amid the crashing spray that sent up a thin veil of mist, through which the setting sun was reflected in many a bright rainbow. It was indeed a glorious sight! and we stopped for several minutes gazing on it; when suddenly Louisa, letting go my arm, exclaimed, as she pointed downwards —

“See! See the swell beneath that large black rock yonder; the tide is making fast; we must get quickly down, if you wish to test St. Senan’s power.”

I had no time left me to ask what peculiar virtues the saint dispensed through the mediation of his well, when she broke from my side, and hurried down the steep descent: in a moment we had reached the shore, upon which already the tide was fast encroaching, and had marked with its dark stain the yellow sand within a few feet of the well. As we drew nearer, I perceived the figure of an old woman, bent with age, who seemed busily occupied sprinkling the water of the spring over something that, as I came closer, seemed like a sailor’s

jacket. She was repeating some words rapidly to herself; but on hearing our approach, she quickly collected her bundle together under her remnant of a cloak, and sat waiting our approach in silence.

"It's Molly Ban!" said Louisa suddenly, and growing pale as she spoke. "Give her something — if you have any money, — I beseech you."

There was no opportunity for inquiring further about her now: for the old woman slowly rose from the stone, by the aid of a stick, and stood confronting us. Her figure was singularly short — scarce four feet in height; but her head was enormously large, and her features which were almost terrific in ugliness, were swarthy as a gipsy's; a man's hat was fastened upon her head by a red kerchief, which was knotted beneath her chin; a short cloak of faded scarlet, like what the peasantry of the west usually wear, covered her shoulders; beneath which a patched and many-coloured petticoat appeared, that reached to the middle of her legs, which, as well as her feet, were completely naked — giving a look of wildness and poverty in one so old I cannot attempt to convey.

The most singular part of her costume, however, was a rude collar she wore round her neck of sea shells — among which, here and there, I could detect some bits of painted and gilded carving, like fragments of a wreck. This strange apparition now stood opposite me, her dark eyes fixed steadily on my companion, to whom, unlike the people of the country, she never made the slightest reverence, or showed any semblance of respect.

"And was it to spy after me, Miss Loo, ye brought down yer sweetheart to the well this evening?" said

the hag, in a harsh, grating voice, that seemed the very last effort of some suppressed passion.

Louisa's arm grasped mine, and I could feel it tremble with agitation as she whispered in my ear —

“Give her money quickly; I know her.”

“And is your father going to send me back to gaol because the cattle's got the rot amongst them? ha, ha, ha,” said she, breaking into a wild, discordant laugh. “There 'ill be more mourning than for that, at Castle Bellew, before long.”

Louisa leaned against me faint and almost falling, while, drawing out my purse hastily, I held forth my hand full of silver. The old hag clutched at it eagerly, and, as her dark eyes flashed fire, she thrust the money into a pocket at her side, and again broke out into a horrid laugh.

“So, you 're beginnin' to know me, are ye? Ye won't mock Molly Ban now — eh? no, faith, nor Mary Lafferty either, that turned me from the door and shut it agin me. Where 'ill her pride be to-morrow night, when they bring in her husband a corpse to her? Look at that.”

With these words she threw her cloak on one side, and showed the blue jacket of a fisherman which I had seen her sprinkling with the water as we came up.

“The blue water will be his winding-sheet this night, calm as it is now.”

“Oh, Molly dear, don't speak this way.”

“Molly dear!” echoed the beldame, in an accent of biting derision. “Who ever heerd one of your name call me that? or are ye come for a charm for that young man beside you? See now; the sun's just gone; in a minit more the sea 'ill be in, and it 'ill be too late.

Here, come near me — kneel down there — kneel down, I say; or is it only my curse ye mind?"

"She's mad, poor thing," said I, in my companion's ear. "Let her have her way — do as she bids you."

Sinking with terror, pale as death, and trembling all over, Louisa bent one knee upon the little rock beside the well, while the old hag took her fair hand within her own skinny fingers and plunged it rudely in the well.

"There, drink," said she, offering me the fair palm, through which the clear water was running rapidly, while she chanted rather than spoke the rude rhyme that follows: —

"By the setting sun,
The flowing sea,
The waters that run,
I swear to thee

That my faith shall be true, as this moment now,
In weal or in woe, wherever, or how:
So help me, St. Senan, to keep my vow."

The last words had scarcely been uttered when Louisa, who apparently had been too much overcome by terror to hear one word the hag muttered, sprung up from the stone, her face and neck covered with a deep blush, her lip trembling with agitation, while her eyes were fixedly directed towards the old woman with an expression of haughty anger.

"Ay, ye may look as proud as ye like. It's little I mind ye, in love or in hate. Ye are well humbled enough now. And as for you," said she, turning towards me a look of scornful pity — "you, I wish ye joy of your fair sweetheart — let her only keep her troth like her own mother, and ye'll have a happy heart to sit at yer fireside with."

The blood fled from Louisa's cheek as she said this — a deadly paleness spread over her features — her lips were bloodless and parted — and her hands firmly clenched together and pressed against her side, bespoke the agony of the moment. It lasted not longer; for she fell back fainting and insensible into my arms. I bathed her face and temples from the well — I called upon her — rubbed her hands within my own, and endeavoured by every means to arouse her, but in vain. I turned to beg for aid from the woman, but she was gone. I again endeavoured to awake her from the stupor, but she lay cold, rigid, and motionless — her features had stiffened like a corpse, and showed no touch of life. I shouted aloud for aid; but, alas! we were far from all human habitations, and the wild cries of the curlew were the only sounds that met my ear, or the deep rushing of the sea, as it broke nearer and nearer to where I stood. A sudden pang of horror shot across me as I looked around and below, and saw no chance of aid from any quarter. Already the sun was below the horizon, and the gray twilight gave but gloomy indications of all around — the sea, too, was making fast — the foam had reached us, and even now the salt tide had mingled its water with the little spring. No more time was to be lost. A projecting point of rock intervened between us and the little path by which we had descended to the beach, over this the spray was now splashing, and its base was only to be seen at intervals between the advancing or retiring wave. A low, wailing sound, like distant wind, was creeping over the water, which from time to time was curled along the round-backed wave with all the threatening aspect of a coming storm — the sea

birds wheeled round in circles, waking the echoes with their wild notes — and the heavy swell of the breaking sea roared through many a rocky cavern with a sad and mournful melody. I threw one last look above where the tall beetling cliff was lost in the gloom of coming night, another on the broad bleak ocean, and then, catching up my companion in my arms, set forward. For the first few moments I felt not my burthen. My beating heart throbbed proudly, and, as I pressed her to my bosom, how I nerved myself for any coming danger by the thought that all the world to me lay in my arms. Every step, however, brought me further out; the sea, which at first washed only to my ancles, now reached my knees: my step became unsteady; and when for an instant I turned one look on her who lay still and insensible within my grasp, I felt my head reel, and my sight wander, as I again looked out on the dark water that rolled around us. We were now near the rocky point which, once passed, placed us in safety; and to reach this I summed up every effort. Around this the waves had worn a deeper track, and against its side they beat and lashed themselves to foam, which boiled in broad sheets around. A loud cheer from some one on the cliff above us turned my glance upwards, and I could see lights moving backwards and forwards, through the darkness: before I could reply to the voice, however, a large wave came mantling near, gathering force as it approached, and swelling its gigantic mass, so as to shut out all besides. I fixed myself firmly to resist the shock, and slightly bending, opposed my shoulder to the mighty roll of water, that now towered like a wall above us. On it came, till its dark crest frowned

above our heads; for a second or two it seemed to pause, as the white curl tipped its breaking edge, and then, with a roll like thunder, broke over us. For an instant I held my footing; at length, however, my step tottered—I felt myself lifted up, and then hurled headlong beneath the swollen volume of water, that closed above my head. Stunned, but not senseless, I grasped my burden closer to my heart, and struggled to regain my footing. The wave passed inwards as I rose to my feet, and a sea of boiling foam hissed around me. Beyond, all was dim and indistinct; a brooding darkness stretched towards the sea, and landward, the tall cliffs were wrapped in deep shadow, except when the light that I saw before flitted from place to place, like the dancing wild-fire. A loud cheer from on high made me suppose that we were perceived; but my attention was turned away by a low moaning sound that came floating over the water; and as I looked, I could see that the black surface swelled upwards, as if by some mighty force beneath, and rose towering into the air. The wave that now approached us was much greater than the former one, and came thundering on, as if impatient for its prey. My fear was of being carried out to sea, and I looked hastily around for some rocky point to hold on by, but in vain: the very sands beneath me seemed moving and shifting; the voice of thunder was in my ears — my senses reeled, and the thought of death by drowning, with all its agony, came over me.

“Oh! my father — my poor father!” said a low plaintive voice beside my cheek; and the next instant the blood rushed warm to my heart. My courage rallied; my arm grew nerved and strong — my foot-

steps seemed to grasp the very ground, and, with 'a bold and daring spirit, I waited for the coming shock. On it came, a mighty flood, sweeping high above us as we struggled in the midst: the blue water moved on, unbroken. For a moment or two I felt we were borne along with a whirlwind speed — then suddenly we touched the strand; but only for a second, for the returning wave came thundering back, and carried us along with it. My senses now began to wander: the dark and gloomy sea stretched around us; the stars seemed to flit to and fro; the roar of water and the sounds of human voices were mingled in my ears; my strength, too, was failing me, and I buffeted the waves with scarcely consciousness. Just at that moment, when, all dread of danger past, the gloomy indifference to life is fast succeeding, I saw a bright gleam of light flying rapidly across the water; the shouts of voices reached me also, but the words I heard not. Now falling beneath, now rising above the foamy surface, I struggled on, my only strength to press home closer to my bosom the form of her my heart was filled by; when of a sudden I felt my arm rudely grasped on either side. A rope, too, was thrown around my waist, and I was hurried inwards towards the shore amid cries of "all safe! all safe! not too fast, there!" A dreary indistinctness of what followed even still haunts my mind. A huge wood-fire upon the beach — the figures of the fishermen — the country people passing hither and thither — the tumult of voices — and a rude chair, in which lay a pale half-fainting form. The rest I know not.

It was dark — so dark, I could not see the persons that moved beside me. As we passed along the grassy

turf in silence, I held a soft hand in mine, and a fair cheek rested on my shoulder, while masses of long and dripping hair fell on my neck and bosom. Carried by two stout peasant fishermen in a chair, Louisa Bellew, faint but conscious of the danger past, was borne homeward. I walked beside her, my heart too full for words. A loud wild cheer burst suddenly forth, and a bright gleam of light aroused me from my trance of happiness. The steps were crowded with people — the large hall so full we scarce could force our way. The door of the parlour was now thrown open, and there sat the pale, gaunt figure of the old man, his eyes staring wildly, and his lips parted; his hands resting on each arm of his chair, but all still and motionless. Bursting from those that carried her, she sprang towards him with a cry; but ere she reached his arms he had fallen from his seat to his knees; and, with his hands clasped above his head, and upturned eyes, poured forth his prayer to God; sinking to his side, she twined her hands with his; and, as if moved by the magic of the scene, the crowd fell to their knees, and joined in the thanksgiving. It was a moment of deep and touching feeling, to hear the slow, scarce articulate words of that old man, who turned from the sight of her his heart treasured, to thank the great Father of mercy, who had not left him childless in his age — to mark the low sobs of those around, as they strove to stifle them; while tears coursed down the hard and weather-beaten cheeks of humble poverty, as they muttered to themselves their heartfelt thanks for her preservation. There was a pause: the old man turned his eyes upon his child, and, like a dammed-up current breaking forth, the warm tears gushed out;

and, with a cry of "My own — my only one!" he fell upon her neck and wept.

I could hear no more. Springing to my feet, I dashed through the hall, and, resisting every effort to detain me, rushed down the steps and gained the lawn. Once there alone, I sank down upon the sward, and poured forth my heart in tears of happiness.

CHAPTER XI.

An unlooked-for meeting.

I MADE many ineffectual efforts to awake in the morning after my adventure. Fatigue and exhaustion, which seem always heaviest when incurred by danger, had completely worn me out, and scarcely had I succeeded in opening my eyes, and muttering some broken words, ere again I dropped off to sleep, soundly, and without a dream.

It was late in the afternoon when at length I sat up in my bed, and looked about me. A gentle hand suddenly fell upon my shoulder, and a low voice, which I at once recognised as Father Tom's, whispered: —

"There now, my dear fellow, lie down again. You must not stir for a couple of hours yet."

I looked at him fixedly for a moment, and, as I clasped his hand in mine, asked —

"How is she, father?"

Scarcely were the words spoken when I felt a burning blush upon my cheek. It was the confidence of months long that found vent in one second; — the pent-up secret of my heart that burst from me unconsciously, and I hid my face upon the pillow, and felt as though I had betrayed her.

"Well — quite well," said the old man, as he pressed my hand forcibly in his own. "But let us not speak now. You must take more rest, and then have your arm looked to. I believe you have forgotten all about it."

"My arm!" repeated I, in some surprise; while, turning down the clothes, I perceived that my right arm was sorely bruised, and swollen to an immense size. "The rocks have done this," muttered I. "And she, father, — what of her, for heaven's sake?"

"Be calm, or I must leave you," said the priest: "I said before that she was well. *Poor boy!*"

There was something so touching in the tone of the last words that, without my knowing why, I felt a kind of creeping fear pass across me, and a dread of some unknown evil steal over me.

"Father," said I, springing up, and grasping him with both my hands, while the pain of my wounded arm shot through my very heart, "You are an honest man, and you are a man of God, — you would not tell me a lie. Is she well?" The big drop fell from my brow as I spoke.

He clasped his hands fervently together as he replied, in a voice tremulous with agitation, —

"I never told a lie."

He turned away as he spoke, and I lay down in my bed with a mind relieved, but not at rest.

Alas, how hard it is to be happy! The casualties of this world come on like waves, one succeeding the other. We may escape the heavy roll of the mighty ocean, and be wrecked in the still, smooth waters of the land-locked bay. We dread the storm and the hurricane, and we forget how many have perished within

sight of shore. But yet a secret fear is ever present with us when danger hovers near; and this sense of some impending evil it was which now darkened me, and whispered me to be prepared.

I lay for some time sunk in my reflections, and when I looked up, the priest was gone. A letter had fallen on the ground, as if by accident, and I rose to place it on my table, when, to my surprise, I found it addressed to myself. It was marked, "On his Majesty's service," and ran thus: —

"SIR — I have received his Excellency's orders to inform you, that unless you, on receipt of the present letter, at once return to your duty as a member of the staff, that your name will be erased from the list, and the vacancy immediately filled up.

"I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

"HENRY HOWARD.

"Dublin Castle."

What could have caused the great alteration in his Excellency's feelings that this order evinced, I could not conceive, and felt hurt and indignant at the tone of a letter which came on me so completely by surprise. I knew, however, how much my father looked to my strict obedience to every call of duty, and resolved, that come what would, I should at once resume my position on the duke's staff.

These were but momentary reflections. My thoughts recurred at once to where my heart was dwelling — with her whose very image lived within me. Try how I would, I could think of no pleasure in which she took not part — imagine no scheme of life in which

she was not concerned. Ambition had lost its charm: the path of glory I had longed to tread, I felt now as nothing, beside that heather walk which led me towards her; — and if I were to have chosen between the most brilliant career, high station, influence and fortune could bestow, and the lowly condition of a dweller in these wild mountain solitudes, I felt that not a moment of hesitation or doubt would mark my decision.

There was a kind of heroism in the relinquishing all the blandishments of fortune, all the seductions of the brilliant world, for one whose peaceful and humble life strayed not beyond the limits of these rugged mountains; — and this had its charm. There were times when I loved to ask myself whether Louisa Bellew would not, even amid all the splendour and display of London life, be as much admired and courted as the most acknowledged of beauty's daughters; — now I turned rather to the thought of how far happier and better it was to know that a nature so unhackneyed, a heart so rich in its own emotions, was never to be exposed to the callous collision of society, and all the hardened hypocrisy of the world.

My own lot, too, how many more chances of happiness did it not present as I looked at the few weeks of the past, and thought of whole years thus gliding away, loving and beloved. A kind of stir, and the sound of voices beneath my window, broke my musings, and I rose and looked out. It proceeded from the young girl and the country lad who formed the priest's household. They were talking together before the door, and pointing in the direction of the high road, where a cloud of dust had marked the passage of some car-

riage, an event rare enough to attract attention in these wild districts.

"And did his reverence say that the captain was to be kept in bed till he came back?"

"Ah, then, sure, he knew well enough," said Biddy, "that the young man would be up and off to the castle the moment he was able to walk — ay, and, maybe, before it too. Troth, Patsey, it's what I'm thinking, there's nobody knows how to coort like a raal gentleman."

"Och, botheration," said Patsey, with an offended toss of his head, and a look of half malice.

"Faix, you may look how you like, but it's truth I'm telling ye. They know how to do it. It isn't winking at a body, nor putting their great rough arms round their neck; but it's a quiet, mannerly, dacent way they have, and soothing voice, and a look undher their eyes, as much as to say — maybe you wouldn't now."

"Troth, Biddy," said Patsey, sharply, "it strikes me that you know more of their ways than is just convenient — eh, do you understand me now?"

"Well, and if I do," replied Biddy, "there's no one can be *evenen* it to you, for I'm sure it wasn't you taught me."

"Ye want to provoke me," said the young man, rising, and evidently more annoyed than he felt disposed to confess; "but, faix, I'll keep my temper. It's not after spaking to his reverence, and buying a cow and a dresser, that I'm going to break it off."

"Heigh-ho!" said Biddy, as she adjusted a curl that was most coquettishly half falling across her eyes; "sure there's many a slip betune the cup and the lip,

as the poor dear young gentleman will find out when he wakes."

A cold fear ran through me as I heard these words, and the presentiment of some mishap, that for a few moments I had been forgetting, now came back in double force. I set about dressing myself in all haste, and, notwithstanding that my wounded arm interfered with me at each instant, succeeded at last in my undertaking. I looked at my watch, it was already six o'clock in the afternoon, and the large mountains were throwing their great shadows over the yellow strand. Collecting from what I had heard from the priest's servants that it was their intention to detain me in the house, I locked my door on leaving the room, and stole noiselessly down the stairs, crossed the little garden, and passing through the beech hedge, soon found myself upon the mountain path. My pace quickened as I breasted the hill side; my eyes firmly fixed upon the tall towers of the old castle, as they stood proudly topping the dense foliage of the oak trees. Like some mariner who gazes on the long wished-for beacon that tells of home and friends — so I bent my steadfast looks to that one object, and conjured up many a picture to myself of the scene that might be at that moment enacting there. Now I imagined the old man seated, silent and motionless beside the bed where his daughter, overcome with weakness and exhaustion, still slept; her pale face scarce coloured by a pinkish stain that marked the last trace of feverish excitement: now I thought of her as if still seated in her own drawing-room, at the little window that looked seaward; looking, perhaps upon the very spot that marked our last

night's adventure, and, mayhap, blushing at the memory.

As I came near the park I turned from the regular approach to a small path which, opening by a wicket, led to a little flower garden beside the drawing-room. I had not walked many paces when the sound of some one as if sobbing, caught my ear. I stopped to listen, and could distinctly hear the low broken voice of grief quite near me. My mind was in that excited state that every breeze that rustled, every leaf that stirred thrilled through my heart; the same dread of something, I knew not what, that agitated me as I awoke came fresh upon me, and a cold tremor crept over me. The next moment I sprang forward, and as I turned the angle of the walk beheld with what relief of heart, that the cries proceeded from a little child, who, seated in the grass, was weeping bitterly. It was a boy of scarce five years old that Louisa used to employ about the garden, rather to amuse the little fellow to whom she had taken a liking, than for the sake of services, which at the best were scarcely harmless.

"Well, Billy," said I, "what has happened to you, my boy: have you fallen and hurt yourself?"

"Na," was the only reply; and sinking his head between his knees, he sobbed more bitterly than ever.

"Has Miss Loo been angry with you then?"

"Na, na," was the only answer, as he poured forth a flood of tears.

"Come, come, my little man. What is it? Tell me, and perhaps we can set it all to rights."

"Gone, gone away for ever," cried the child, as a burst of pent-up agony broke from him; and he cried as though his very heart would break.

Again my terrible foreboding crossed my mind, and without waiting to ask another question I rushed forward, cleared the little fence of the flower garden at a spring, and stood within a few yards of the window. It lay open as usual; the large china vase of moss roses, that she had plucked the evening before, stood on the little table beside it. I stopped for an instant to breathe; the beating of my heart was so painful, that I pressed my hand upon my side. At that instant I had given my life to have heard her voice — but for one single word I had bartered my heart's blood — but all was as hushed and still as midnight. I thought I did hear something like a sigh — yes — and I now could distinctly hear the rustling sound of some one as if turning in a chair. Sir Simon Bellew, for some cause or other, I knew never came into that room. I listened again — yes — and now too I could see the shadow of a figure on the floor. I sprang forward to the window, and cried out, "Louisa;" the next instant I was in the room — and my eyes fell upon the figure of — Ulick Burke! seated in a deep arm-chair, his leg resting on a low stool, he was reclining at half length; his face pale as death, and his very lips blanched, but then, there rested on the mouth the same curl of insolent mockery that marked it when first we met.

"Disappointed, I fear, Sir," said he, in a tone which, however weakened by sickness, had lost nothing of its sneering bitterness.

"I confess, Sir," said I, confusedly, "that this is a pleasure I had not anticipated."

"Nor I either, Sir," replied he, with a dark frown. "Had I been able to have rung the bell before, the letter that lies there should have been sent to you, and

might have spared both of us this "pleasure," as you are good enough to call it."

"A letter for me," said I, eagerly; then half ashamed at my own emotion, and not indifferent to the sickly and apparently dying form before me, I hesitated, and added, "I trust that you are recovering from the effects of your wound."

"Damn the wound, Sir; don't speak to me about it. You never came here for that, I suppose. Take your letter, Sir." A purple flush here coloured his features, as though some pang of agonizing pain had shot through him, and his livid lip quivered with passion. "Take your letter, Sir," and he threw it towards me as he spoke. I stood amazed and thunder-struck at this sudden outbreak of anger, and for a second or two could not recover myself to speak.

"You mistake me," said I.

"Mistake you! no, confound me, I don't mistake you, I know you well and thoroughly. But you mistake me, ay, and damnably too, if you suppose that because I'm crippled here this insolence shall pass unpunished. Who but a coward, Sir, would come thus, to taunt a man like me? Yes, Sir, a coward! I spoke it — I said it — would you like to hear it over again? — or if you don't like it, the remedy is near you — nearer than you think. There are two pistols in that case — both loaded with ball; take your choice, and your own distance; and here, where we are, let us finish this quarrel; for mark me" — and here his brow darkened, till the veins, swelled and knotted in his forehead, looked like indigo — "mark me, the account shall be closed one day or other."

I saw at once that he had lashed his fury up to an

ungovernable pitch, and that to speak to him was only to increase his passion; so I stooped down without saying a word and took up the letter that lay at my feet.

"I am waiting your reply, Sir," said he, with a low voice, subdued by an inward effort into a seeming quietness of tone.

"You cannot imagine," said I, mildly, "that I could accept of such a challenge as this, nor fight with a man who cannot leave his chair."

"And who has made me so, Sir? Who has made me a paralytic thing for life? But if that be all, give me your arm, and help me through that window — place me against that yew-tree, yonder. I can stand well enough. You won't — you refuse me this! Oh, coward! coward! You grow pale and red again! Let your white lip mutter, and your nails eat into your hands with passion! — your heart is craven — and you know it!"

Shall I dare to own it? For an instant or two my resolution tottered, and involuntarily my eyes turned to the pistol-case upon the table beside me. He caught the look, and in a tone of triumphant exultation cried out: —

"Bravo, bravo! What! you hesitate again! Oh, that this should not be before the world! — in some open and public place! — that men should not look on and see us here!"

"I leave you, Sir," said I sternly; "thankful, for *your* sake, at least, that this is not before the world."

"Stop, Sir, — stop!" cried he, hoarse with rage. "Ring that bell."

I hesitated, and he called out again, "Ring that bell, Sir!"

I approached the chimney, and did as he desired. The butler immediately made his appearance.

"Nicholas," cried the sick man, "bring in the servants, — bring them in here: — you hear me well. I want to show them something they have never seen. Go!"

The man disappeared at once, and as I met the scowling look of hate that fixed its glare upon me, once more I felt myself to waver. The struggle was but momentary. I sprung to the window, and leaped into the garden. A loud curse broke from Burke as I did so: a cry of disappointed wrath, like the yell of a famished wolf, followed. The next moment I was beyond the reach of his insolence and his invective.

The passionate excitement of the moment over, my first determination was to gain the approach, and return to the house by the hall-door; my next, to break the seal of the letter which I held in my hand, and see if its contents might not throw some light upon the events which somehow I felt were thickening around me, but of whose nature and import I knew nothing.

The address was written in a stiff, old-fashioned hand, but the large seal bore the arms of the Bellew family, and left no doubt upon my mind that it had come from Sir Simon. I opened it with a trembling and throbbing heart, and read as follows: —

"MY DEAR SIR — The event of last night has called back upon a failing and broken memory, the darkest hour of a long and blighted life, and made the old man, whose steadfast gaze looked onward to the tomb,

turn once backward to behold the deepest affliction of his days, — misfortune, crime, remorse. I cannot, even now, while already the very shadow of death is on me, recount the sad story I allude to; enough for the object I have in view if I say, that where I once owed the life of one I held dearest in life, the hand that saved lived to steal, and the voice that blessed me was perjured and forsworn, — since that hour I have never received a service of a fellow-mortal, until the hour when you rescued my child. And oh! loving her as I do, — wrapt up as my soul is in her image, I could have borne better to see her cold and dripping corse laid down beside me, than to behold her, as I have done, in your arms. You must never meet more. The dreadful anticipation of long-suffering years is creeping stronger and stronger upon me; and I feel in my inmost heart, that I am reserved for another and a last bereavement ere I die.

“We shall have left before this letter reaches you. You may, perhaps, hear the place of our refuge, — for such it is, — but I trust that to your feelings as a gentleman and a man of honour I can appeal in the certain confidence, that you will not abuse my faith — you will not follow us.

“I know not what I have written, — nor dare I read it again. Already my tears have dimmed my eyes, and are falling on the paper, so let me bid you farewell — an eternal farewell. My nephew has arrived here. I have not seen him, nor shall I; but he will forward this letter to you after our departure.

“Yours,

“S. BELLEW.”

The first stunning feeling past, I looked around me to see if it were not some horrid dream, and the whole events but the frightful deception of a sleeping fancy. But bit by bit the entire truth broke upon me — the full tide of sorrow rushed in upon my heart. The letter I could not comprehend further than that some deep affliction had been recalled by my late adventure. But then, the words of the hag, — the brief, half-uttered intimations of the priest, came to my memory. Her mother! said I, — what of her mother? I remembered Louisa had never mentioned, nor even alluded to her; and now a thousand suspicions crossed my mind, which all gave way before my own sense of bereavement, and the desolation and desertion I felt in my own heart. I threw myself upon the ground where she walked so often beside me, and burst into tears. But a few brief hours, and how surrounded by visions of happiness and love. Now, bereft of every thing, what charm had life for me! How valueless, how worthless did all seem! The evening sun I loved to gaze on, the bright flowers, the waving grass, the low murmur of the breaking surf, that stole like music over the happy sense, were now but gloomy things or discordant sounds. The very high and holy thoughts that used to stir within me, were changed to fierce and wrathful passions, or the low drooping of despair. It was night — still and starry night — when I arose and wended my way towards the priest's cottage.

CHAPTER XII.

The priest's kitchen.

THE candles were burning brightly, and the cheerful bog fire was blazing on the hearth, as I drew near the window of the priest's cottage; but yet there was no one in the room. The little tea-kettle was hissing on the hob, and the room had all that careful look of watchful attention bestowed upon it that showed the zeal of his little household.

Uncertain how I should meet him — how far explain the affliction that had fallen on me — I walked for some time up and down before the door; at length I wandered to the back of the house, and passing the little stable, I remarked that the pony was absent. The priest had not returned perhaps since morning — perhaps he had gone some distance off — in all likelihood accompanied the Bellews — again the few words he had spoken that morning recurred to me, and I pondered in silence over their meaning. As I thus mused, a strong flood of mellow light attracted me, as it fell in a broad stream across the little paved court, and I now saw that it came from the kitchen. I drew near the window in silence, and looked in; before the large turf fire were seated three persons — two of them, who sat in the shining light I at once recognised as the servants, but the third was concealed in the shadow of the chimney, and I could only trace the outline of his figure against the blaze; I was not long, however, in doubt as to his identity.

“Seemingly then you're a great traveller,” said Patsey, the priest's man, addressing the unknown.

A long whiff of smoke, patiently emitted, and a polite wave of the hand in assent, was the reply.

“And how far did you come to-day, av I might be so bould?” said Mary.

“From the cross of Kiltermon, beyond Gurtmore, my darling; and sure it is a real pleasure and a delight to come so far to see as pretty a crayture as yourself” — here Patsey looked a little put out, and Mary gave a half smile of encouragement — “for,” continued the other, breaking into a song —

“Though I love a fox in a cover to find,
When the clouds is low, with a sou-west wind,
Faix, a pretty girl is more to my mind
Than the tally-high-ho of a morning.”

I need scarcely say that the finale of this rude verse was given in a way that only Tipperary Joe could accomplish, as he continued —

“And just show me one with an instep high,
A saucy look, and a roguish eye,
Who 'd smile ten times for once she 'd sigh,
And I 'm her slave till morning.”

“And that's yoursel', devil a less — ye ho, ye ho, tallyho — I hope the family isn't in bed.”

“Troth, seemingly,” said Patsey, in a tone of evident pique, “it would distress you little av they were: you seem mighty well accustomed to making yourself at home.”

“And why wouldn't the young man,” said Mary, apparently well pleased to encourage a little jealousy on the part of her lover, “and no harm neither? And ye do be always with the hounds, Sir?”

“Yes, Miss, that 's what I be doing; but I wonder what's keeping the captain — I've a letter here for him, that I know ought to have no delay. I run all the way for fourteen miles over Mey'nacurraghew mountain to be here quick with it.”

I opened the door as I heard this, and entered the kitchen.

"Hurroo! by the mortal," cried Joe, with one of his wild shouts, "it's himself. Arrah, darlin', how is every bit in your skin?"

"Well, Joe, my poor fellow, I am delighted to see you safe and sound once more. Many a day have I reproached myself for the way you suffered for my sake, and for the manner I left you."

"There's only one thing you have any rayson to grieve over," said the poor fellow, as the tears started to his eyes, and rolled in heavy drops down his cheeks, "and here it is."

As he spoke, he drew from his bosom a little green silk purse, half filled with gold.

"Ah, captain, jewel, why wouldn't you let a poor fellow taste happiness his own way? Is it because I had no shoes on me that I hadn't any pride in my heart? and is it because I wasn't rich that you wouldn't let me be a friend to you, just to myself alone? Oh! little as we know of grand people and their ways, troth, they don't see our hearts half as plain. See, now, I'd rather you'd have come up to the bed that morning and left me your curse — ay, devil a less — than that purse of money, and it wouldn't do me as much harm."

He dropped his head as he spoke, and his arm fell listlessly to his side, while he stood mute and sorrow-struck before me.

"Come, Joe," said I, holding out my hand to him — "come, Joe, forgive me. If I don't know better, remember we were only new acquaintances at that time — from this hour we are more."

The words seemed to act like a spell upon him; he stood proudly up, and his eyes flashed with their wildest glare, while, seizing my hand, he pressed it to his lips, and called out —

“While there’s a drop in my heart, darlin’ —”

“You have a letter for me,” said I, glad to turn the channel of both our thoughts. “Where did you get it?”

“At the Curragh, Sir, no less. I was standing beside the staff, among all the grand generals and the quality, near the lord liftinint, and I heard one of the officers say, ‘If I knew where to write to him, I’d certainly do so; but he has never written to any of us since his duel.’ ‘Ah,’ said another, ‘Hinton’s an odd fellow that way.’ The minit I heard the name, I up and said to him, ‘Write the letter, and I’ll bring it, and bring you an answer beside, av ye want it.’”

““And who the devil are you?” said he.

““Troth,” said I, ‘there’s more on this race knows me nor yourself, fine as ye are.’ And they all began laughing at this — for the officer grew mighty red in the face, and was angry — and what he was going to say it’s hard to tell, for just then Lord Clonmel called out —

““Sure it’s Tipperary Joe himself; begad, every one knows him. Here, Joe, I owe you half-a-crown since last meeting at the lough.’

““Faix, you do,” says I, ‘and ten shillings to the back of it, for Lanty Cassan’s mare that I hired to bring you home, when you staked the horse — you never paid it since.’ And then there was another laugh; but the end of all was, he writ a bit of a note where he was on horseback, with a pencil, and here it is.”

So saying, he produced a small crumpled piece of paper, in which I could with some difficulty trace the following lines: —

“DEAR JACK — If the fool who bears this ever arrive with it, come back at once. Your friends in England have been worrying the D — to command your return to duty; and there are stories afloat about your western doings that your presence here can alone contradict.

“Yours,

J. HORTON.”

It needed not a second for me to make up my mind as to my future course, and I said —

“How can I reach Limerick the shortest way?”

“I know a short cut,” said Joe, “and if we could get a pony I’d bring you over the mountain before to-morrow evening.”

“And you,” said I — “how are you to go?”

“On my feet, to be sure; how else would I go?”

Despatching Joe, in company with Patsey, in search of a pony to carry me over the mountain, I walked into the little parlour which I was now about to take my leave of for ever.

It was only then, when I threw myself upon a seat, alone and in solitude, that I felt the full force of all my sorrow — the blight that had fallen on my dearest hopes, and the blank, bleak prospect of life before me. Sir Simon Bellew’s letter I read over once more; but now the mystery it contained had lost all interest for me, and I had only thoughts for my own affliction. Suddenly, a deep burning spot glowed on my cheek, as I remembered my interview with Ulick Burke, and I

sprung to my legs, and for a second or two felt undecided whether I would not give him the opportunity he so longed for. It was but a second and my better reason came back, and I blushed even deeper with shame than I had done with passion.

Calming myself with a mighty effort, I endeavoured to pen a few lines to my worthy and kind friend, Father Loftus. I dared not tell him the real cause of my departure, though indeed I guessed from his absence that he had accompanied the Bellews, and but simply spoke of my return to duty as imperative, and my regret that after such proofs of his friendship I could not shake his hand at parting. The continued flurry of my feelings doubtless made this a very confused and inexplicit document; but I could do no better. In fact, the conviction I had long been labouring under, but never could thoroughly appreciate, broke on me at the moment. It was this: the sudden vicissitudes of everyday life in Ireland are sadly unsuited to our English natures and habits of thought and action. These changes from grave to gay — these outbreaks of high-souled enthusiasm, followed by dark reflective traits of brooding thought — these noble impulses of good — these events of more than tragic horror — demand a changeful, even a forgetful temperament to bear them; and while the Irishman rises or falls with every emergency of his fate, with us impressions are eating deeper and deeper into our hearts, and we become sad and thoughtful, and prematurely old. Thus at least did I feel, and seemed to myself as though very many years had passed over me since I had left my father's house. The tramp of feet, and the sounds of speaking and laughter out-

side, interrupted my musings, and I heard my friend Joe carolling at the top of his voice —

“Sir Pat bestrode a high-bred steed,
And the huntsman one that was broken-kneed;
And Father Fitz had a wiry weed,
With his tally-high-ho in the morning.”

“Faith and you’re a great beast entirely, and one might dance a jig on your back, and leave room for the piper besides.”

I opened the window, and in the bright moonlight beheld the party leading up a short, rugged-looking pony, whose breadth of beam and square proportions fully justified all Joe’s encomiums.

“Have you bought this pony for me, Joe?” cried I.

“No, Sir, only borrowed him. He’ll take you up to Wheley’s mills, where we’ll get Andy’s mare to-morrow morning.”

“Borrowed him?”

“Yes.”

“Where’s his owner?”

“He’s in bed, where he ought to be. I tould him through the door who it was for, and that he needn’t get up, as I’d find the ways of the place myself, and ye see so I did.”

“Told him who it was for! Why he never heard of me in his life.”

“Devil may care; sure you’re the priest’s friend, and who has a better warrant for every thing in the place. Don’t you know the song —

‘And Father Fitz had no cows nor sheep,
And the devil a hen or pig to keep;
But a pleasanter house to dine or sleep
You’d never find till morning.

'For Molly, says he, if the fowls be few,
 I 've only one counsel to give to you:
 There 's hens hard by — go "kill for two,"
 For I 've a friend till morning.'

By the rock of Cashel, it 'ud be a hard case av the priest was to want. Look how the ould saddle fits him — faix, ye 'd think he was made for it."

I am not quite sure that I felt all Joe's enthusiasm for the beast's perfections; nor did the old yeomanry "demi-pique," with its brass mountings and holsters, increase my admiration. Too happy, however, to leave a spot where all my recollections were now turned to gloom and despondence, I packed my few traps, and was soon ready for the road.

It was not without a gulping feeling in my throat, and a kind of suffocating oppression at my heart, that I turned from the little room where, in happier times, I had spent so many pleasant hours; and, bidding a last good-bye to the priest's household, told them to say to Father Tom how sad I felt at leaving before he returned. This done, I mounted the little pony, and, escorted by Joe, who held the bridle, descended the hill, and soon found myself by the little rivulet that murmured along the steep glen through which our path was lying.

CHAPTER XIII.

Tipperary Joe.

I HAVE already passingly alluded to Joe's conversational powers; and certainly they were exercised on this occasion with a more than common ability, either taking my silence as a suggestion for him to speak — or perhaps, and more probably, perceiving that some

deep depression was over me — the kind-hearted fellow poured forth his stores of song and legend without ceasing. Now amusing me by his wild and fitful snatch-
es of old ballads — now narrating in his simple but touching eloquence some by-gone story of thrilling interest — the long hours of the night passed over, and at day-break we found ourselves descending the mountain towards a large and cultivated valley, in which I could faintly distinguish in the misty distance the little mill where our relay was to be found.

I stopped for a few minutes to gaze upon the scene before me. It was one of those peaceful landscapes of rural beauty, which beam more of soothing influence upon the sorrow-struck heart than the softest voice of consolation. Unlike the works of man, they speak directly to our souls, while they appeal to our reason; and the truth comes forced upon us, that we alone must not repine. A broad and richly cultivated valley, bounded by mountains whose sides were clothed with deep wood — a stream, whose wayward course watered every portion of the plain, was seen now flowing among the grassy meadows, or peeping from the alders that lined the banks. The heavy mist of morning was rolling lazily up the mountain-side; and beneath its gray mantle the rich green of pasture and meadow land, was breaking forth, dotted with cattle and sheep. As I looked, Joe knelt down and placed his ear upon the ground, and seemed for some minutes absorbed in listening. Then suddenly springing up, he cried out,

“The mill isn’t going to-day — I wonder what’s the matter. I hope Andy isn’t sick.”

A shade of sorrow came over his wild features, as he muttered between his teeth the verse of some old

song, of which I could but catch the last two lines —

“And when friends are crying around the dying,
Who wouldn't wish he had lived alone!”

“Ay,” cried he aloud, as his eye glistened with an unnatural lustre, “better be poor Tipperary Joe, without house or home, father or mother, sister or friend, and when the time comes, run to earth, without a wet eye after him.”

“Come, come, Joe, you have many a friend; and when you count them over, don't forget me in the reckoning.”

“Whisht, whisht,” he whispered in a low voice, as if fearful of being overheard, “don't say that — them's dangerous words.”

I turned towards him with astonishment, and perceived that his whole countenance had undergone a striking change. The gay and laughing look was gone; the bright colour had left his cheek; and a cold, ghastly paleness was spread over his features; and as he cast a hurried and stealthy look around him, I could mark that some secret fear was working within him.

“What is it, Joe?” said I; “what's the matter? Are you ill?”

“No,” said he, in a tone scarce audible, “no; but you frightened me just now, when you called me your friend.”

“How could that frighten you, my poor fellow?”

“I'll tell you — that's what they called my father — they said he was friendly with the gentlemen, and sign's on it:” he paused, and his eye became rooted to the ground, as if on some object there from which he could not turn his gaze: “yes, I mind it well — we were

sitting by the fire in the guard-room all alone by ourselves — the troops was away, I don't know where — when we heard the tramp of men marching, but not regular, but coming as if they didn't care how, and horses and carts rattling and rumbling among them.

“‘Thim 's the boys,’ says my father. ‘Give me that ould cockade there, till I stick it in my cap, and reach me over the fiddle, till I rise a tune for them.’

“I mind little more till we was marching at the head of them through the town, down towards the new college that was building — it's Maynooth I'm speaking about — and then we turned to the left, my father scraping away all the time every tune he thought they'd like; and if now and then by mistake he'd play any thing that did not plaze them, they'd damn and blast him with the dreadfulest curses, and stick a pike into him, till the blood would come running down his back; and then my father would cry out —

“‘I'll tell my friends on you for this — divil a lie in it, but I will.’

“At last we came to the duke's wall, and then my father sat down on the road side, and cried out that he wouldn't go a step farther, for I was crying away with sore feet at the pace we were going, and asking every minute to be let sit down to rest myself.

“‘Look at the child,’ says he, ‘his feet's all bleeding.’

“‘Ye have only a little further to go,’ says one of them that had cross belts on, and a green sash about him.

“‘The divil resave another step,’ says my father.

“‘Tell Billy to play us “The Farmer's Daughter” before he goes,’ says one in the crowd.

““I’d rather hear ‘The Little Bowld Fox,’” says another.

““No, no, ‘Baltiorum! Baltiorum!’” says many more behind.

““Ye shall have them all,’ says my father, ‘and that’ll plaze ye.’

“And so he set to, and played the three tunes as beautiful as ever ye heard; and when he was done, the man with the belts ups and says to him —

““Ye’re a fine hand, Billy, and it’s a pity to lose you, and your friends will be sorry for you’ — and he said this with a grin — ‘but take the spade there and dig a hole, for we must be jogging, it’s nigh day.’

“Well, my father, though he was tired enough, took the spade, and began digging as they told him, for he thought to himself, the boys is going to hide the pikes and the carbines before they go home. Well, when he worked half an hour, he threw off his coat, and set to again; and at last he grew tired and sat down on the side of the big hole, and called out —

““Isn’t it big enough now, boys?”

““No,’ says the captain, ‘nor half.’

“So my father set to once more, and worked away with all his might, and they all stood by, talking and laughing with one another.

““Will it do now?’ says my father; ‘for sure enough I’m clean beat.’

““Maybe it might,’ says one of them: ‘lie down and see if it’s the length.’

““Well, is it that it’s for?’ says my father: ‘faix, I never guessed it was a grave;’ and so he took off his cap and lay down his full length in the hole.

“‘That’s all right,’ says the others, and began with spades and shovels to cover him up. At first he laughed away as hearty as the rest; but when the mould grew heavy on him, he began to screech out to let him up, and then his voice grew weaker and fainter, and they waited a little, then worked harder, and then came a groan, and all was still; and they patted the sods over him and heaped them up; and then they took me and put me in the middle of them, and one called out, ‘March!’ I thought I saw the green sod moving on the top of the grave as we walked away, and heard a voice half-choking calling out, ‘There, boys, there!’ and then a laugh. But sure I often hear the same still, when there’s nobody near me, and I do be looking on the ground by myself.”

“Great God!” cried I, “is this true?”

“True as you’re there,” replied he. “I was ten years of age when it happened, and I never knew how time went since, nor how long it is ago, only it was in the year of the great troubles here; and the soldiers and the country people never could be cruel enough to one another; and whatever one did to-day, the others would try to beat it out to-morrow. But it’s truth every word of it; and the place is called ‘Billy the fool’s grave’ to this hour. I go there once a year to see it myself.”

This frightful story — told, too, with all the simple power of truth — thrilled through me with horror, long after the impression seemed to have faded away from him who told it; and though he still continued to speak on, I heard nothing; nor did I mark our progress, until I found myself beside the little stream which conducted to the mill.

CHAPTER XIV.

The high road.

JOE was right, the mill was not at work, for "Andy" had been summoned to Ennis, where the assizes were then going forward. The mare which had formed part of our calculations was also absent; and we sat down in the little porch to hold a council of war as to our future proceedings. After canvassing the question for some time, Joe left me for a few minutes, and returned with the information that the high road to Ennis lay only a couple of miles distant, and that a stage-coach would pass there in about two hours, by which I could reach the town that evening. It was therefore decided that he should return with the pony to Murranakilty; while I, having procured a gossoon to carry my baggage, made the best of my way towards the Ennis road.

Joe soon found me an urchin to succeed him as my guide and companion, and with an affectionate leave-taking, and a faithful promise to meet me sometime and somewhere, we parted.

So long as I had journeyed along beside my poor, half-witted follower, the strange and fickle features of his wandering intellect had somehow interrupted the channels of my own feelings, and left me no room for reflection on my changed fortunes. Now, however, my thoughts returned to the past with all the force of some dammed-up current, and my blighted hopes threw a dark and sombre shadow over all my features. What cared I what became of me? why did I hasten hither and thither? were my first reflections. If life had lost its charm, so had misfortune its terror for me.

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There seemed something frivolous and contemptible in the return to those duties, which in all the buoyant exhilaration of my former life had ever seemed unfitting and unmanly. No: rather let me seek for some employment on active service — the soldier's career I once longed for, to taste its glorious enthusiasm — I wished for now, to enjoy its ceaseless movement and exertion.

As I thought over all I had seen and gone through since my arrival in Ireland — its varied scenes of mirth and woe; its reckless pleasures, its wilder despair — I believed that I had acquired a far deeper insight into my own heart, in proportion as I looked more into those of others. A not unfrequent error this. The outstretched page of human nature that I had been gazing on had shown me the passions and feelings of other men laid bare before me, while my own heart lay dark, enshrined, and unvisited within me. I believed that life had no longer any thing to tie me to it — and I was not then twenty! Had I counted double as many years, I had had more reason for the belief, and more difficulty to think so.

Sometimes I endeavoured to console myself by thinking of all the obstacles that, under the happiest circumstances, must have opposed themselves to my union with Louisa Bellew. My mother's pride alone seemed an insurmountable one. But then I thought of what a noble part had lain before me, to prefer the object of my love — the prize of my own winning — to all the caresses of fortune — all the seductions of the world. Sir Simon Bellew, too — what could he mean? The secret he alluded to, what was it? Alas!

what mattered it — my doom was sealed — my fate decided — I had no care for how!

Such were my thoughts as I journeyed along the path that conducted towards the high road, while my little guide, bare-legged and bare-footed, trotted on merrily before me, who, with none of this world's goods, had no room in his heart for sorrow or repining.

We at last reached the road, which, dusty and deserted, skirted the side of a bleak mountain for miles — not a house to be seen, not a traveller, nor scarce a wheel-track to mark the course of any one having passed there. I had not followed it for more than half an hour, when I heard the tramp of horses and the roll which announced the approach of an equipage. A vast cloud of dust, through which a pair of leaders were alone visible, appeared at a distance. I seated myself at the roadside to await its coming, my little gossoon beside me, evidently not sorry to have reached a resting-place; and once more my thoughts returned to their well-worn channel, and my head sank on my bosom. I forgot where I was, when suddenly the prancing of a pair of horses close to me aroused me from my stupor, and a postillion called out to me in no very subdued accent —

“Will ye hook on that trace there, avick, av ye’re not asleep.”

Whether it was my look of astonishment at the tone and the nature of the request, or delay in acceding to it, I know not, but a hearty curse from the fellow on the wheelers perfectly awakened me, and I replied by something not exactly calculated to appease the heat of the discussion.

"Be gorra," said he of the leaders, "it's always the way with your shabby genteels;" and he swung himself down from the saddle to perform the required service himself.

During this I took the opportunity of looking at the carriage, which was a large and handsome barouche, surrounded by all the appurtenances of travel — capcases, imperials, &c. — a fat-looking, lazy footman, nodding sleepily on the box, and a well-tanned lady's-maid was reading a novel in the rumble. Within I saw the figure of a lady, whose magnificent style of dress but little accorded with the unfrequented road she was traversing, and the wild inhabitants so thinly scattered through it. As I looked, she turned round suddenly, and before I could recognise her, called out my name. The voice in an instant re-assured me — it was Mrs. Paul Rooney herself.

"Stop," cried she, with a wave of her jewelled hand. "Michael, get down. Only think of meeting you here, captain."

I stammered out some explanation about a cross-cut over the mountain to catch the stage, and my desire to reach Ennis; while the unhappy termination of our intimacy, and my mother's impertinent letter, kept ever uppermost in my mind, and made me confused and uneasy. Mrs. Paul, however, had evidently no participation in such feelings, but welcomed me with her wonted cordiality, and shook my hand with a warmth that proved, if she had not forgotten, she had certainly forgiven the whole affair.

"And so you are going to Ennis," said she, as I assumed the place beside her in the barouche, while Michael was busily engaged in fastening on my luggage

behind; the which two movements seemed to be as naturally performed as though the amiable lady had been in the habit of taking up walking gentlemen with a portmanteau every day of her life: "well, how fortunate! I'm going there too. Pole," — so she now designated her excellent spouse, it being the English for Paul, — "has some little business with the chief justice — two murder cases, and a forcible abduction — and I promised to take him up on my return from Miltown, where I have been spending a few weeks. After that we return to our little place near Bray where I hope you'll come and spend a few weeks with us."

"This great pleasure I fear I must deny myself," said I, "for I have already outstayed my leave, and have unfortunately somehow incurred the displeasure of his excellency; and unless," — here I dropped my voice, and stole a half timid look at the lady under my eye-lashes, — "some one with influence over his grace shall interfere on my behalf, I begin to half fear lest I may find myself in a sad scrape."

Mrs. Paul blushed, turned away her head, while pressing my hand softly in her own she murmured —

"Don't fret about it — it won't signify."

I could scarce repress a smile at the success of my bit of flattery, for as such alone I intended it, when she turned towards me, and, as if desirous to change the topic, said —

"Well, we heard of all your doings — your steeple-chase, and your duel, and your wound, and all that — but what became of you afterwards?"

"Oh!" said I hesitatingly, "I was fortunate enough to make a most agreeable acquaintance, and with him

I have been spending a few weeks on the coast — Father Tom Loftus.”

“Father Tom!” said Mrs. Rooney with a laugh, “the pleasantest crayture in Ireland. There isn’t the like of him. Did he sing you the ‘Priest’s Supper?’” The lady blushed as she said these words as if carried away by a momentary excitement to speak of matters not exactly suitable; and then drawing herself up, she continued in a more measured tone — “You know, captain, one meets such strange people in this world.”

“To be sure, Mrs. Rooney,” said I encouragingly; “and to one like yourself, who can appreciate character, Father Loftus is indeed a gem.”

Mrs. Rooney, however, only smiled her assent, and again changed the course of the conversation.

“You met the Bellews, I suppose, when down in the west?”

“Yes,” stammered I; “I saw a good deal of Sir Simon when in that country.”

“Ah, the poor man!” said she with real feeling, “what an unhappy lot his has been!”

Supposing that she alluded to his embarrassment as to fortune, the difficulties which pressed upon him from money causes, I merely muttered my assent.

“But I suppose,” continued she, “you have heard the whole story — though the unhappy event occurred when you were a mere child.”

“I am not aware to what you allude,” said I eagerly, while a suspicion shot across my mind that the secret of Sir Simon Bellew’s letter was at length to be cleared up.

“Ah,” said Mrs. Rooney with a sigh, “I mean poor dear Lady Bellew’s affair — when she went away with

a major of dragoons; and to be sure an elegant young man he was, they said. Pole was on the inquest, and I heard him say he was the handsomest man he ever saw in his life."

"He died suddenly, then?"

"He was shot by Sir Simon in a duel the very day week after the elopement."

"And she?" said I.

"Poor thing, she died of a consumption, or some say a broken heart, the same summer."

"That is a sad story, indeed," said I musingly; "and I no longer wonder that the poor old man should be such as he is."

"No, indeed; but then he was very much blamed after all, for he never had that Jerningham out of the house."

"Horace Jerningham!" cried I, as a cold sickening fear crept over me.

"Oh, yes, that was his name. He was the Honourable Horace Jerningham, the younger son of some very high family in England; and, indeed, the elder brother has died since, and they say the title has become extinct."

It is needless for me to attempt any description of the feelings that agitated my heart, when I say that Horace Jerningham was the brother of my own mother. I remembered when a child to have heard something of a dreadful duel, when all the family went into deep mourning, and my mother's health suffered so severely, that her life was at one time feared for; but that fate should ever have thrown me into intimacy with those upon whom this grievous injury was inflicted, and by whom death and mourning were brought upon my

house, was a sad and overwhelming affliction, that rendered me stunned and speechless. How came it then, thought I, that my mother never recognised the name of her brother's antagonist when speaking of Miss Bellew in her letter to me. Before I had time to revolve this doubt in my mind, Mrs. Rooney had explained it.

"And this was the beginning of all his misfortunes. The friends of the poor young man were people of great influence, and set every engine to work to ruin Sir Simon, or as he then was, Mr. Simon Barrington. At last they got him outlawed, and it was only the very year he came to the title and estates of his uncle, that the outlawry was taken off, and he was once more enabled to return to Ireland. However, they had their revenge if they wished for it; for what between recklessness and bad company, he took to gambling when abroad, contracted immense debts, and came into his fortune little better than a beggar. Since that the world has seen little of him, and indeed he owes it but little favour. Under Pole's management the property is now rapidly improving; but the old man cares little for this, and all I believe he wishes for is, to have health enough to go over to the Continent, and place his daughter in a convent before he dies."

Little did she guess how every word sank deep into my heart. Every sentence of the past was throwing its shadow over all my future, and the utter wreck of my hopes seemed now inevitable.

While thus I sat brooding o'er my gloomiest thoughts, Mrs. Rooney, evidently affected by the subject, maintained a perfect silence. At last, however, she seemed to have summed up the whole case in her mind, as

turning to me confidentially, with her hand pressed upon my arm, she added in a true moralizing cadence, very different from that she had employed when her feelings were really engaged —

“And that ’s what always comes of it, when a gallant, gay Lutheran gets admission into a family.”

Shall I confess, that notwithstanding the deep sorrow of my heart, I could scarce repress an outbreak of laughter at these words. We now chatted away on a variety of subjects, till the concourse of people pressing onwards to the town, the more thickly populated country, and the distant view of chimneys, apprised us we were approaching Ennis. Notwithstanding all my wishes to get on as fast as possible, I found it impossible to resist an invitation to dine that day with the Rooneys, who had engaged a small select party at the Head Inn, where Mrs. Rooney’s apartments were already awaiting her.

It was dusk when we arrived, and I could only perceive that the gloomy and narrow streets were densely crowded with country-people, who conversed together in groups. Here and there a knot of legal folk were congregated, chatting in a louder tone; and before the court-house stood the carriage of the chief justice, with a guard of honour of the county yeomanry, whose unsoldierlike attitudes and droll equipments were strongly provocative of laughter. The postillions, who had with true tact reserved a “trot for the town,” whipped and spurred with all their might; and as we drove through the thronged streets, a strange impression fled abroad that we were the bearers of a reprieve, and a hearty cheer from the mob followed us to our arrival at the inn-door — a compliment which

Mrs. Paul, in nowise attributing to any thing save her own peculiar charms and deserts, most graciously acknowledged by a smile and a wave of her hand, accompanied by an unlimited order for small beer — which act of grace was, I think, even more popular than their first impression concerning us.

“Ah, captain,” said the lady with a compassionate smile, as I handed her out of the carriage, “they are so attached to the aristocracy!”

CHAPTER XV.

The assize town.

WHEN I had dressed, I found that I had above an hour to spare before dinner, so taking my hat I strolled out into the town. The streets were even more crowded now than before. The groups of country people were larger, and as they conversed together in their native tongue, with all the violent gesticulation and energetic passion of their nature, an inexperienced spectator might well have had supposed them engaged in active strife.

Now and then a kind of movement — a species of suppressed murmur from the court-house, would turn every eye in that direction, and then every voice was hushed; not a man moved. It was evident that some trial of the deepest interest was going forward, and on inquiry I learned that it was a murder case, in which six men were concerned. I heard also that the only evidence against them was from one of their own party, who had turned, as the lawyer's term it, approver. I knew well that no circumstance was more calculated than this to call forth all that is best and worst in Irish character, and thought, as I walked along through the

dense crowd, I could trace in the features around me, the several emotions by which they were moved. Here was an old gray-headed man leaning on a staff; his lack-lustre eyes gazing in wonder at some speaker who narrated a portion of the trial — his face all eagerness, and his hands tremulous with anxiety; but I felt I could read the deep sorrow of his heart as he listened to the deed of blood, and wondered how men would risk their tenure of a life which, in a few days more, perhaps, he himself was to leave for ever. Here beside him was a tall and powerfully-built countryman; his hat drawn upon his eyes, that peered forth from their shadow — dark, lustrous, and almost wild in their expression; his face, tanned by season and exposure, was haggard and care-worn, and in his firmly-clenched lips and fast-locked jaw you could read the resolute purpose of one who could listen to nothing save the promptings of the spirit of vengeance, and his determination that blood should have blood.

Some there were whose passionate tones and violent gestures showed that all their sympathy for the prisoners was merged in the absorbing feeling of detestation for the informer; and you could mark in such groups as these, that more women were mingled, whose blood-shot eyes and convulsed features made them appear the very demons of strife itself. But the most painful sight of all was the children who were assembled around every knot of speakers — their eyes staring, and their ears eagerly drinking in each word that dropped; no trace of childhood's happy carelessness was there; no sign of that light-hearted youth that knows no lasting sorrow. No: theirs were the rigid features of intense passion, in which fear, suspicion,

craft, but above all, the thirst for revenge, were writ. There were some whose clenched hand and darkened brow betokened the gloomy purpose of their hearts. There were others whose outpoured wrath heaped curses on him who had betrayed his fellows — there was grief, violent, wild, and frantic — there was mute and speechless suffering, but not a tear did I see, not even on the cheek of childhood or of woman — no! Their seared and withered sorrow, no dew of tears had ever watered. Like a blighting simoom, the spirit of revenge had passed over them, and scorched and scathed all the verdant charities of life. The law, which in other lands is looked to for protection and security, was regarded by them as an instrument of tyranny; they neither understood its spirit, nor trusted its decisions; and when its blow fell upon them, they bent their heads in mournful submission, to raise them when opportunity offered, in wild and stern defiance. Its denunciations came to them sudden and severe: they deemed the course of justice wayward and capricious — the only feature of certainty in its operation being, that its victim was ever the poor man.

The passionate elements of their wild natures seemed but ill-adapted to the slow-sustained current of legal investigation: they look upon all the details of evidence as the signs of vindictive malice; and thought that trickery and deceit were brought in arms against them. Hence each face among the thousands there, bore the traces of that hardened, dogged suffering that tells us that the heart is rather steeled with the desire to avenge, than bowed to weep over the doomed.

Before the court-house a detachment of soldiers was drawn up, under arms; their unmoved features and fixed

attitudes presenting a strange contrast to the excited expressions and changeful gestures of those about them. The crowd at this part was thickest, and I could perceive in their eager looks and mute expressions, that something more than common had attracted their attention; my own interest was, however, directed in another quarter; for, through the open window of the courthouse I could hear the words of a speaker, whom I soon recognised as the counsel for the prisoner addressing the jury. My foraging cap passed me at once through the ranks, and after some little crushing I succeeded in gaining admission to the body of the court.

Such was the crowd within, I could see nothing but the heads of a closely-wedged mass of people — save, at the distant part of the court, the judges, and to their right, the figure of the pleader, whose back was turned towards me.

Little as I heard of the speech, I was overwhelmed with surprise at what I did hear. Touching on the evidence of the “approver” but slightly, the advocate dwelt with a terrific force upon the degraded character of a man who could trade upon the blood of his former friends and associates; scarce stopping to canvass how the testimony bore home upon the prisoner, he burst forth into an impassioned appeal to the hearts of the jury, on faith betrayed and vows forsworn; and pictured forth the man who could thus surrender his fellows to the scaffold, as a monster whose evidence no man could trust — no jury confide in; and when he had thus heightened the colouring of his description by every power of an eloquence that made the very building ring he turned suddenly towards the informer himself, as pale, wan, and conscience-stricken, he cowered beneath

the lightning glance from an eye that seemed to pierce his secret soul within him, and, apostrophizing his virtues, he directed every glance upon the miserable wretch that writhed beneath his sarcasm. This seemed, indeed, the speaker's forte. Never did I hear any thing so tremendous as the irony with which he described the credit due to one who had so often been sworn and forsworn — "who took an oath of allegiance to his king, and an oath of fealty to his fellows, and then was there that day with a third oath, by which, in the blood of his victim, he was to ratify his perjury to both, and secure himself an honourable independence. The caustic satire verged once — only once — on something that produced a laugh, when the orator suddenly stopt —

"I find, my lord, I have raised a smile. God knows, never did I feel less merriment. Let me not be condemned. Let not the laugh be mistaken — few are those events that are produced by folly and vice that fire the hearts with indignation, but something in them will shake the sides with laughter. So, when the two famous moralists of old beheld the sad spectacle of Life, the one burst into laughter, the other melted into tears. They were each of them right, and equally right. But these laughs are the bitter rueful laughs of honest indignation, or they are the laughs of hectic melancholy and despair. But look there, and tell me where is your laughter now."

With these words he turned fully round and pointed his finger to the dock, where the six prisoners side by side leaned their haggard, death-like faces upon the rail, and gazed with stupid wonder at the scene before them. Four of the number did not even know the language, but seemed, by the instinct of their position,

to feel the nature of the appeal their advocate was making, and turned their eyes around the court as if in search of some one look of pity or encouragement that should bring comfort to their hearts. The whole thing was too dreadful to bear longer, so I forced my way through the crowd, and at last reached the steps in front of the building. But here a new object of horror presented itself, and one which to this hour I cannot chase from before me. In the open space between the line formed by the soldiers and the court, knelt a woman, whose tattered garments scarce covered a figure emaciated nearly to starvation — her cheeks, almost blue with famine, were pinched inwards — and her hands, which she held clasped with outstretched arms before her, were like the skinny claws of some wild animal. As she neither spoke nor stirred, there was no effort made to remove her; and there she knelt, her eyes, bloodshot and staring, bent upon the door of the building. A vague fear took possession of me. Somehow I had seen that face before. I drew near, and as a cold thrill ran through my blood, I remembered where. She was the wife of the man by whose bedside I had watched in the mountains. A half dread of being recognised by her kept me back for a moment — then came the better feeling, that perhaps I might be able to serve her, and I walked towards her; but though she turned her eyes towards me as I approached, her look had no intelligence in it — and I could plainly see that reason had fled, and left nothing save the poor suffering form behind it. I endeavoured to attract her attention, but all in vain; and at last tried by gentle force to induce her to leave the place; but a piercing shriek, like one whose tones had long

dwelt in my heart, broke from her, and a look of such unutterable anguish, that I was obliged to desist and leave her.

The crowd made way for me as I passed out, and I could see in their looks and demeanour the expression of grateful acknowledgment for even this show of feeling on my part — while some muttered as I went by a “God reward ye,” “the Lord be good to you,” as though at that moment they had nothing in their hearts save thoughts of kindness and words of blessing.

I reached my room, and sat down a sadder, perhaps a wiser man; and yet I know not this. It would need a clearer head than mine to trace all the varying and discordant elements of character I had witnessed to their true source — to sift the evil from the good, to know what to cherish, what to repress, whereon to build hope, or what to fear. Such was this country once! — has it changed since?

CHAPTER XVI.

The bar dinner.

AT nine o'clock the jury retired, and a little afterwards the front drawing-room of the head inn was becoming every moment more crowded, as the door opened to admit the several members of the bar, invited to partake of Mrs. Rooney's hospitalities. Mrs. Rooney's, I say; for the etiquette of the circuit forbidding the attorney to entertain the dignitaries of the craft, Paul was only present at his own table on sufferance, and sought out the least obtrusive place he could find, among the juniors and side-dishes.

No one who could have seen the gay, laughing, merry mob of shrewd, cunning-looking men, that chatted

away there, would have imagined them, a few moments previously, engaged in a question where the lives of four of their fellow-men hung in the balance, and where, at the very moment, the deliberation was continued that should, perhaps, sentence them to death upon the scaffold.

The instincts of a profession are narrow and humiliating things to witness. The surgeon who sees but in the suffering agony of his patient, the occasional displacement of certain anatomical details, is little better than a savage: the lawyer who watches the passions of hope and fear, distrust, dread, and suspicion, only to take advantage of them in his case, is far worse than one. I confess, on looking at these men, I could never divest myself of the impression, that the hired and paid-for passion of the advocate; the subtlety that is engaged special; the wit that is briefed; the impetuous rush of indignant eloquence that is bottled up from town to town in circuit, and, like soda-water, grows weaker at every corking — make but a poor *ensemble* of qualities for the class who, *par excellence*, stand at the head of professional life.

One there was, indeed, whose haggard eye and blanched cheek showed no semblance of forgetting the scene in which so lately he had been an actor. This was the lawyer who had defended the prisoners. He sat in a window, resting his head upon his hand — fatigue, exhaustion, but more than all, intense feeling portrayed in every lineament of his pale face.

“Ah,” said the gay, jovial-looking attorney-general, slapping him familiarly on the shoulder — “ah, my dear fellow; not tired, I hope. The court was tremendously hot; but come, rally a bit: we shall want you. Bennet

and O'Grady have disappointed us, it seems; but you are a host in yourself."

"Maybe so," replied the other faintly, and scarce lifting his eyes; "but you can't depend on my elevation."

The ease and readiness of the reply, as well as the tones of the voice, struck me, and I perceived that it was no other than the prior of the Monks of the Screw who had spoken. Mrs. Rooney made her appearance at the moment, and my attention was soon taken away by the announcement of dinner.

One of the judges arrived in time to offer his arm, and I could not help feeling amused at the mock-solemnity of the procession, as we moved along. The judge, I may observe was a young man, lately promoted, and one whose bright eye and bold dashing expression bore many more traces of the outer bar, than it smacked of the dull gravity of the bench. He took the end of the table beside Mrs. Paul, and the others soon seated themselves promiscuously along the table.

There is a species of gladiatorial exhibition in lawyers' society that is certainly very amusing. No one speaks without the foreknowledge that he is to be caught up, punned on, or ridiculed, as the case may be. The whole conversation is, therefore, a hail-storm of short stories, quips, and retorts, intermingled with details of successful bar stratagems, and practical jokes played off upon juries. With less restraint than at a military mess, there is a strong professional feeling of deference for the seniors, and much more tact and knowledge of the world to unite them. While thus the whole conversation ran on topics of the circuit, I was

amazed at Mrs. Rooney's perfect intimacy with all the niceties of a law joke, or the fun of a *nisi prius* story. She knew the chief peculiarities of the several persons alluded to, and laughed loud and long at the good things she listened to. The judge alone, above all others, had the lady's ear. His bold but handsome features—his rich commanding voice, nothing the worse that it was mellowed by a little brogue—his graceful action and manly presence—stamped him as one well suited to be successful wherever good looks, ready tact, and consummate conversational powers have a field for their display. His stories were few, but always pertinent and well told; and frequently the last joke at the table was capped by him, when no one else could have ventured to try it—while the rich roll of his laugh was a guarantee for mirth that never failed.

It was when my attention was drawn off by Mrs. Rooney, to some circumstance of our former intimacy, that a hearty burst of laughing, from the end of the table, told that something unusually absurd was being related.

"Yes, Sir," said a shrewd-looking, thin old fellow, in spectacles, "we capitulated, on condition of leaving the garrison with all the honours of war; and, faith, the sheriff was only too glad to comply."

"Bob Mahon is certainly a bold fellow, and never hard pushed, whatever you may do with him."

"Bob Mahon!" said I: "what of him?"

"Keatley has just been telling how he held out the jail of Ennis for four weeks against the sheriff. The jailor was an old tenant of his, and readily came into his plans. They were victualled for a long siege, and, as the place was strong, they had nothing to fear.

When the garrison was summoned to surrender, they put a charge of No. 4 into the sub-sheriff, that made him move to the rear; and as the prisoners were all coming from the assizes, they were obliged to let him have his own terms, if he'd only consent to come out. So they gave him twelve hours' law, and a clear run for it; and he's away."

This was indeed a very quick realization of Father Tom's prediction, and I joined in the mirth the story elicited — not the less readily, that I was well acquainted with the principal actor in it.

While the laughter still continued, the door opened, and a young barrister stole into the room, and whispered a few words into the ear of the counsel for the prisoners. He leaned back in his chair, and pushed his wine-glass hurriedly before him.

"What! Collinson," cried the attorney-general, "have they agreed?"

"Yes, Sir — a verdict of guilty."

"Of course; the evidence was too home for a doubt," said he, filling his glass from the decanter.

A sharp glance from the dark eye of the opposite counsel was the only reply, as he rose and left the room.

"Our friend has taken a more than common interest in this case," was the cool observation of the last speaker; "but there was no getting over Hanlon's testimony." Here he entered into some detail of the trial, while the buzz and confusion of voices became greater than ever. I took this opportunity of making my escape, and joined Mrs. Rooney, who a short time before had retired to the drawing-room.

Mrs. Paul had contrived, even in the short space since her arrival, to have converted the drawing-room into a semblance of something like an apartment in a private house — books, prints, and flowers, judiciously disposed, as well as an open piano-forte, giving it an air of comfort and propriety far different from its ordinary seeming. She was practising Moore's newly-published song of, "Fly from this world, dear Bessy, with me," as I entered.

"Pray, continue, my dear Mrs. Rooney," said I: "I will take it as the greatest possible favour —"

"Ah!" said Mrs. Paul, throwing up her eyes in the most languishing ecstasy — "ah! you have soul, I know you have."

Protesting that I had strong reasons to believe so, I renewed my entreaty.

"Yes," said she, musing, and in a Siddons' tone of soliloquy — "yes, the poet is right —"

'Music hath charms to smooth the savage beast.'

But I really can't sing the melodies — they are too much for me. The allusion to former times, when King O'Toole and the rest of the royal family — Ah! you are aware, I believe, that family reasons —"

Here she pressed her embroidered handkerchief to her eyes with one hand, while she pressed mine convulsively with the other.

"Yes, yes," said I, hurriedly, while a strong temptation to laugh outright seized me. "I have heard that your descent —"

"Yes, my dear; if it wasn't for the Danes, and the cruel battle of the Boyne, there's no saying where I might not be seated now."

She leaned on the piano as she spoke, and seemed overpowered with sorrow. At this instant the door opened, and the judge made his appearance.

"A thousand pardons for the indiscretion," said he, stepping back as he saw me sitting with the lady's hand in mine. I sprang up, confused and ashamed; and, rushing past him, hurried down stairs.

I knew how soon my adventure, for such it would grow into, would be the standing jest of the bar mess; and not feeling disposed to be present at their mirth, I ordered a chaise, and, before half an hour elapsed, was on my road to Dublin.

CHAPTER XVII.

The return.

WE never experience to the full how far sorrow has made its inroad upon us, until we come back, after absence, to the places where we have once been happy, and find them lone and tenantless. While we recognise each old familiar object, we see no longer those who gave them all their value in our eyes — every inanimate thing about, speaks to our senses, but where are they who were wont to speak to our hearts? The solitary chamber is then, indeed, but the body of all our pleasure, from which the soul has departed for ever. These feelings were mine as I paced the old, well-worn stairs, and entered my quarters in the castle. No more I heard the merry laugh of my friend O'Grady, nor his quick step upon the stair. The life, the stir, the bustle of the place itself seemed to have all fled; the court only echoed to the measured tread of the grenadier, who marched backwards and forwards beside the flag-staff, in the centre of the open space. No cavalcade of joyous

riders — no prancing horses, led about by grooms — no showy and splendid equipages; all was still, sad, and neglected-looking. The dust whirled about in circling eddies, as the cold wind of an autumnal day moaned through the arched passages and gloomy corridors of the old building. A care-worn official, or some slatternly inferior of the household would perhaps pass, from time to time, but except such as these, nothing stirred.

The closed shutters and drawn-down blinds showed that the viceroy was absent, and I found myself the only occupant of the building.

It requires the critical eye of the observant resident of great cities, to mark the changes which season and fashion effect in their appearance. To one unaccustomed to their phases it seems strange to hear, "How empty the town is — how very few people are in London!" — while the heavy tide of population pours incessantly around him, and his ear is deafened with the ceaseless roll of equipage. But in such a city as Dublin, the alteration is manifest to the least remarking. But little frequented by the country gentry, and never except for the few months when the court is there — still less visited by foreigners — deserted by the professional classes, at least such of them as are independent enough to absent themselves, the streets are actually empty. The occupations of trade, the bustle of commerce, that through every season continue their onward course in the great trading cities, such as Liverpool, Hamburgh, Frankfort, and Bourdeaux, scarce exist here; and save that the tattered garments of mendicancy, and the craving cries of hunger are ever before you, you might fall

into a drowsy reverie as you walked, and dream yourself in Palmyra.

I had strolled about for above an hour, in the moody frame of mind my own reflections and the surrounding objects were well calculated to suggest, when, meeting by accident a subaltern with whom I was slightly acquainted, I heard that the court had that morning left the Lodge in the park, for Kilkenny, where the theatricals of that pleasant city were going forward, a few members of the household alone remaining, who were to follow in a day or two.

For some days previous, I had made up my mind not to remain in Ireland. Every tie that bound me to the country was broken. I had no heart to set about forming new friendships, while the wounds of former ones were still fresh and bleeding; and I longed for change of scene and active occupation, that I might have no time to reflect or look back.

Resolving to tender my resignation on the duke's staff without any further loss of time, I set out at once for the park.

I arrived there in the very nick of time: the carriages were at the entrance, waiting for the private secretary of his grace, and two of the aids-de-camp, who were eating a hurried luncheon before starting. One of the aids-de-camp I knew but slightly, the other was a perfect stranger to me; but Moreton was an intimate acquaintance. He jumped up from his chair as my name was announced, and a deep blush covered his face as he advanced to meet me: —

“My dear Hinton, how unfortunate! Why weren't you here yesterday? It's too late now.”

“Too late for what? I don't comprehend you.”

"Why, my dear fellow," said he, drawing his arm within mine, and leading me towards a window, as he dropped his voice to a whisper, "I believe you heard from me, that his Grace was provoked at your continued absence, and expected at least that you would have written, to ask an extension of your leave. I don't know how it was, but it seemed to me that the Duchess came back from England with some crotchet in her head, about something she heard in London. In any case, they ordered me to write."

"Well, well," said I impatiently; "I guess it all. I have got my dismissal. Isn't that the whole of it?"

He nodded twice, without speaking.

"It only anticipates my own wishes," said I, coolly, "as this note may satisfy you." I placed the letter I had written for the purpose of my resignation in his hand, and continued: — "I am quite convinced in my own mind, that his Grace, whose kindness towards me has never varied, would never have dreamed of this step on such slight grounds as my absence. No, no; the thing lies deeper. At any other time, I should certainly have wished to trace this matter to its source; now, however, chiming as it does with my own plans, and caring little how fortune intends to treat me, I'll submit in silence."

"And take no notice of the affair further?"

"Such is my determination," said I resolutely.

"In that case," said Moreton, "I may tell you, that some story of a lady had reached the Duchess, when in London; some girl that it was reported you endeavoured to seduce, and had actually followed for that purpose to the west of Ireland. There, there; don't take the matter up that way, for heaven's sake. My

dear fellow, hear me out." But I could hear no more: the rushing blood that crowded on my brain stunned and stupified me, and it took several minutes before I became sufficiently collected to ask him to go on.

"I heard the thing so confusedly," said he, "that I cannot attempt any thing like connection in relating it. But the story goes, that your duel in Loughrea did not originate about the steeple-chase, at all, but in a quarrel about this girl, with her brother, or her cousin, who, having discovered your intentions regarding her, you deemed proper to get rid of, as a preliminary. No one but a fool could credit such a thing."

"None but such could have invented it," said I; as my thoughts at once recurred to Lord Dudley de Vere.

"The Duke, however, spoke to General Hinton —"

"To my father! And how did he —"

"Oh, behaved as only he could have done: — 'Stop, my lord,' said he. 'I'll spare you any farther relation of this matter. If it be true, my son is unworthy of remaining on your staff. If it be false, I'll not permit him to hold an appointment where his reputation has been assailed, without affording him an opportunity of defence.' High words ensued, and the end was, that if you appeared before to-day, you were to hear the charge, and have an opportunity for reply. If not, your dismissal was to be made out, and another appointed in your place. Now that I have told you, what I feel the indiscretion of my ever having spoken of, promise me, my dear Hinton, that you will take no step in the matter. The intrigue is altogether beneath you; and your character demands no defence on your part."

"I almost suspect I know the party," said I, gloomily.

"No, no: I'm certain you can't. It is some woman's story; some piece of tea-table gossip, depend on it. In any case, quite unworthy of caring about."

"At all events, I am too indifferent at this moment to feel otherwise about any thing," said I. "So, good-by, Moreton — my regards to all our fellows — Good-by!"

"Good-by, my boy," said he, warmly shaking my hand. "But, stop a moment, I have got some letters for you; they arrived only a few days since."

He took a packet from a drawer as he spoke, and, once more bidding him adieu, I set out on my return to the Castle.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Farewell to Ireland.

MY first care on reaching my quarters was, to make preparations for my departure by the packet of the same evening; my next was, to sit down and read over my letters. As I turned them over, I remarked that there were none from my father nor Lady Charlotte: there was, however, one in Julia's hand; and also a note from O'Grady: the others were the mere common-place correspondence of every-day acquaintances — which I merely threw my eyes carelessly over ere I consigned them to the fire. My fair cousin's possessed — I cannot explain why — a most unusual degree of interest for me; and throwing myself back in my chair, I gave myself up to its perusal.

The epistle opened by a half satirical account of the London season — then nearly drawing to its close;

in which various characters and incidents which I have not placed before my readers, but all well known to me, were touched with that quiet subdued raillery she excelled in. The flirtations, the jiltings, the matches that were on or off, the rumoured duels, debts, and difficulties of every one we were acquainted with, were told with a most amusing smartness; all showing, young as she was, how thoroughly the wear and tear of fashionable life had invested her with the intricate knowledge of character, and the perfect acquaintance with all the intrigues and by-play of the world. How unlike Louisa Bellew, said I, as I laid down the letter after reading a description of a manœuvering mamma and obedient daughter to secure the prize of the season, with a peerage and some twenty thousand pounds per annum. It was true, they were the vices and the follies of the age which she ridiculed, but why should she have ever known them: or ought she to have been conversant with such a state of society as would expose them: were it not better, like Louisa Bellew, to have passed her days amid the simple, unexciting scenes of secluded life, than to have purchased all the brilliancy of her wit and the dazzle of her genius at the price of true female delicacy and refinement? While I asked and answered myself these questions to the satisfaction of my own heart, I could not dismiss the thought, that amid such scenes as London presented, with such associates as fashion necessitated, the unprotected simplicity of Miss Bellew's character would expose her to much both of raillery and coldness; and felt that she would be nearly as misplaced among the proud daughters of haughty England, as my fair cousin in the unfashionable freedom of Dublin life.

I confess as I read on, that old associations came crowding upon me; the sparkling brilliancy of Julia's style reminded me of the charms of her conversational powers, aided by all the loveliness of her beauty, and all the witchery which your true belle of fashion knows how, so successfully, to spread around her; and it was with a flush of burning shame on my cheek, I acknowledged to myself how much her letter interested me. As I continued, I saw O'Grady's name, and to my astonishment found the following: —

“Lady Charlotte came back from the Duke's ball greatly pleased with a certain major of dragoons, who, among his other excellent qualities, turns out to be a friend of yours. This estimable person, whose name is O'Grady, has done much to dissipate her ladyship's prejudices regarding Irishmen: the repose of his manner, and the quiet, unassuming, well-bred tone of his address being all so opposed to her preconceived notions of his countrymen. He dines here twice or thrice a-week; and as he is to sail soon, may happily preserve the bloom of his reputation to the last. My estimate of him is somewhat different: I think him a bold *effrontée* kind of person, esteeming himself very highly, and thinking little of other people. He has, however, a delightful old thing, his servant Corny, whom I am never tired of, and shall really miss much when he leaves us. Now as to yourself, dear cousin, what mean all the secret hints, and sly looks, and doubtful speeches about you here? The mysteries of Udolpho are plain reading compared to your doings. Her ladyship never speaks of you but as ‘that poor boy,’ accompanying the epithet with the sigh with which one speaks of a shipwreck. Sir George calls you John, which shows

he is not quite satisfied about you; and in fact, I begin to suspect you must have become a United Irishman, with 'a lady in the case,' and even this would scarcely demand one half the reserve and caution with which you are mentioned. Am I indiscreet in saying that I don't think De Vere likes you? The major, however, certainly does; and his presence has banished the lordling, for which, really, I owe him gratitude." The letter concluded by saying that my mother had desired her to write in her place, as she was suffering from one of her nervous headaches, which only permitted her to go to the exhibition at Somerset House. My father, too, was at Woolwich on some military business, and had no time for any thing, save to promise to write soon; and that she herself being disappointed by the milliner in a new bonnet, dedicated the morning to me, with a most praiseworthy degree of self-denial and benevolence. I read the signature some half dozen times over, and wondered what meaning in her own heart she ascribed to the words — "Yours, Julia."

Now for O'Grady, said I, breaking the seal of the major's envelope.

"MY DEAR JACK — I was sitting on a hencoop, now pondering on my fortunes, now turning to con over the only book on board, — a very erudite work on naval tactics, with directions how 'to moor a ship in the Downs,' — when a gun came booming over the sea, and a frigate, with certain enigmatical colours flying at her main-top, compelled the old troop ship we were in, to back her top-sails and lie to; we were then steering straight for Madeira, in latitude —, longitude the same; our intention being, with the aid of

Providence, to reach Quebec at some remote period of the summer, to join our service companies in Canada. Having obeyed the orders of H. M. S. Blast, to wait until she overtook us — a measure that nearly cost us two of our masts and the cook's galley, we not being accustomed to stand still, it seemed; a boat came along side with the smallest bit of a midshipman I ever looked at, sitting in the stern sheets, with orders for us to face about, left shoulder forward, and march back to England, where, having taken in the second battalion of the twenty-eighth, we were to start for Lisbon. I need not tell you what pleasure the announcement afforded us; delighted as we were to exchange tomahawks and bowie-knives, for civilized warfare, even against more formidable foes. Behold us then in full sail back to old England, which we reached within a fortnight; only to touch, however, for the twenty-eighth were most impatiently expecting us; and having dedicated three days to taking in water and additional stores, and once more going through the horrible scene of leave-taking between soldiers and their wives, we sailed again. I have little inclination to give you the detail, which newspapers would beat me hollow in, of our march, or where we first came up with the French; a smart affair took place at daybreak, in which your humble servant, to use the appropriate phrase, distinguished himself — 'egad, I had almost said extinguished — for I was shot through the side, loosing part of that conjugal portion of the human anatomy called a rib, and sustaining several other minor damages, that made me appear to the regimental doctor a very unserviceable craft for his majesty's service; the result was, I was sent back with that plaister for a man's vanity, though

not for his wounds, a despatch letter to the Horse Guards, and an official account of the action.

“As nothing has occurred since in the Peninsula to eclipse my performance, I continue to star it here with immense success, and am quite convinced that with a little more loss I might make an excellent match out of the affair. Now to the pleasant part of my epistle. Your father found me out a few evenings since at an evening party at the Duke of York’s, and presented me to your lady mother, who was most gracious in her reception of me; an invitation to dinner the next day followed, and since, I have spent almost every day at your house. Your father, my dear Jack, is a glorious fellow, a soldier in every great feature of the character. You never can have a finer object of your imitation, and your best friend cannot wish you to be more than his equal. Lady Charlotte is the most fascinating person I ever met; her abilities are first-rate, and her powers of pleasing exceed all that ever I fancied even of London fashionables. How you could have left such a house I can scarcely conceive, knowing as I do something of your taste for comfort and voluptuous ease; besides *la cousine*, Lady Julia — Jack, Jack, what a close fellow you are: and how very lovely she is; she certainly has not her equal even here. I scarcely know her, for somehow she rather affects hauteur with my cloth, and rarely deigns any notice of the red coats so plentifully sprinkled along your father’s dinner-table. Her kindness to Corny, who was domesticated at your house for the last five weeks, I can never forget, and even he can’t, it would appear, conjure up any complaint against her: what a testimony to her goodness!

"This life, however, cannot last for ever, and as I have now recovered so far as to mount a horse once more, I have applied for a regimental appointment; your father most kindly interests himself for me, and before the week is over I may be gazetted. That fellow De Vere was very intimate here when I arrived, since he has seen me, however, his visits have become gradually less frequent, and now have almost ceased altogether. This, *entre nous*, does not seem to have met completely with Lady Julia's approval, and I think she may have attributed to me a circumstance in which certainly I was not an active cause. However, happy I may feel at being instrumental in a breach of intimacy between her and one so very unworthy of her, even as a common acquaintance; I will ask you, Jack, when opportunity offers, to put the matter in its true light, for although I may, in all likelihood, never meet her again, I should be sorry to leave with her a more unfavourable impression of me than I really deserve."

Here the letter broke off, lower down on the paper were the following lines, written in evident haste, and with a different ink: —

"We sail to-night — Oporto is our destination. Corny is to remain behind, and I must ask of you to look to him on his arrival in Dublin. Lady Julia likes De Vere, and you know him too well to permit of such a fatal misfortune. I am, I find, meddling in what really I have no right to touch upon, this is, however, *de vous à moi*. God bless you. — Yours ever,
"PHIL O'GRADY."

Poor Phil, said I, as I laid down the letter; in his heart he believes himself disinterested in all this, but I

see plainly he is in love with her himself. Alas, I cannot conceive a heavier affliction to befall the man without fortune than to be thrown among those whose prospects render an alliance impossible, and to bestow his affections on an object perfectly beyond his reach of attainment. Many a proud heart has been torn in the struggle between its own promptings and the dread of the imputation, which the world so hastily confers, of "fortune hunting;" many a haughty spirit has quailed beneath this fear, and stifled in his bosom the thought that made his life a blessed dream. My poor friend, how little will she that has stolen away your peace think of your sorrows!

A gentle tap at my door aroused me from my musings. I opened it and saw, to my surprise, my old companion, Tipperary Joe. He was covered with dust, heated, and travel-stained, and leaned against the door-post to rest himself.

"So," cried he, when he had recovered his breath, "I'm in time to see you once more, before you go. I run all the way from Carlow, since twelve o'clock last night."

"Come in, my poor boy, and sit down. Here's a glass of wine; 't will refresh you. We'll get something for you to eat, presently."

"No: I couldn't eat now. My throat is full, and my heart is up here. — And so you are going away; — going for good and all; never to come back again?"

"Who can say so much as that, Joe? I should, at least, be very sorry to think so."

"And would you, now? And will you really think of ould Ireland when you're away? Hurroo! by the

mortal, there's no place like it, for fun, divilment, and divarsion. But, musha, musha! I'm forgettin', and it's getting dark. May I go with you, to the packet?"

"To be sure, my poor boy; and I believe we have not many minutes to spare."

I despatched Joe for a car, while I threw a last look around my room. Sad things, these last looks, whether bestowed on the living or the dead, the life-like or the inanimate.

There is a feeling that resembles death, in the last glance we are ever to bestow on a loved object. The girl you have treasured in your secret heart, as she passes by on her wedding-day, it may be happy and blissful, lifts up her laughing eyes, the symbol of her own light heart, and leaves, in that look, darkness and desolation to you for ever. The boy your father-spirit has clung to, like the very light of your existence, waves his hand from the quarter-deck, as the gigantic ship bends over to the breeze; the wind is playing through the locks your hand so oftentimes has smoothed; the tears have dimmed his eyes, for, mark! he moves his fingers over them — and this is a last look.

My sorrow had no touch of these. My eye ranged over the humble furniture of my little chamber, while memories of the past came crowding on me; hopes, that I had lived to see blighted; day-dreams dissipated; heartfelt wishes thwarted and scattered. I stood thus for some minutes, when Joe again joined me.

Poor fellow! his wayward and capricious flights, now grave, now gay, were but the mockery of that sympathy my heart required. Still did he heal the sadness of the moment.

We need the voice, the look, the accent of affection,

when we are leaving the spot where we have once been happy. It will not do to part from the objects that have made our home, without the connecting link of human friendship. The hearth, the roof-tree, the mountain, and the rivulet, are not so eloquent as the once syllabled, "Good-by," come it from ever so humble a voice.

The bustle and excitement of the scene beside the packet seemed to afford Joe the most lively gratification; and, like the genius of confusion, he was to be seen flitting from place to place, assisting one, impeding another; while snatches of his wild songs broke from him every moment. I had but time to press his hand, when he was hurried ashore amongst the crowd, and the instant after, the vessel sheered off from the pier, and got under weigh.

The poor boy stood upon a block of granite, waving his cap over his head. He tried a faint cheer, but it was scarcely audible: another, it too failed. He looked wildly around him on the strange, unknown faces, as if a scene of desolation had fallen on him, burst into a torrent of tears, and fled wildly from the spot. And thus I took my leave of Ireland.

At this period of my narrative I owe it to my reader — I owe it to myself — to apologise for the mention of incidents, places, and people, who have no other bearing on my story, than in the impression they made upon me while yet young.

When I arrived in Ireland, I knew scarcely any thing of the world. My opportunities had shown me life, only through the coloured gloss of certain fashionable prejudices: but, of the real character, motives, and habitual modes of acting and 'thinking of others, still

more of myself, I was in total ignorance. The rapidly succeeding incidents of Irish life — their interest, variety, and novelty, all attracted and excited me; and without ever stopping to reflect upon causes, I found myself becoming acquainted with facts. That the changeful pictures of existence so profusely scattered through the land, should have made their impression upon me, is natural enough; and because I have found it easier and pleasanter to tell my reader the machinery of this change in me, than to embody that change itself, is the reason why I have presented before him *tableaux* of life under so many different circumstances, and when, frequently, they had no direct relation to the current of my own fate and the story of my own fortunes.

It is enough of myself to say, that though scarcely older in time, I had grown so in thought and feeling. If I felt, on the one hand, how little my high connexions, and the position in fashionable life which my family occupied, availed me, I learned, on the other, to know that friends, and staunch ones, could be made at once, on the emergency of a moment, without the imposing ceremony of introduction, and the diplomatic interchange of visits. — And now to my story.

CHAPTER XIX.

London.

It was late when I arrived in London, and drove up to my father's house. The circumstances under which I had left Ireland weighed more heavily on me as I drew near home, and reflected over the questions I should be asked, and the explanations I should be expected to afford; and I half dreaded lest my father

should disapprove of my conduct, before I had an opportunity of showing him how little I had been to blame throughout. The noise and din of the carriages, the oaths and exclamations of the coachmen, and the uproar of the streets, turned my attention from these thoughts, and I asked what was the meaning of the crowd.

“A great ball, Sir, at Lady Charlotte Hinton’s.”

This was a surprise, and not of the pleasantest. I had wished that my first meeting, with my father at least, should have been alone and in quietness, where I could fairly have told him every important event of my late life, and explained wherefore I so ardently desired immediate employment on active service, and a total change in that career which weighed so heavily on my spirits. The carriage drew up at the instant, and I found myself once more at home. What a feeling does that simple word convey to his ears who knows the real blessing of a home — that shelter from the world, its jealousies and its envies, its turmoils and its disappointments — where, like some land-locked bay, the still, calm waters sleep in silence, while the storm and hurricane are roaring without — where glad faces and bright looks abound — where each happiness is reflected back from every heart, and ten times multiplied, and every sorrow comes softened by consolation and words of comfort: and how little like this is the abode of the great leader of fashion; how many of the fairest gifts of humanity are turned back by the glare of a hundred wax-lights, and the glitter of gilded lacqueys; and how few of the charities of life find entrance where the splendour and luxury of voluptuous habits have stifled natural feeling, and made even sympathy unfashionable.

It was not without difficulty I could persuade the servants, who were all strangers to me, that the travel-stained, dusty individual before them was the son of the celebrated and fashionable Lady Charlotte Hinton, and at length reached my room to dress.

It was near midnight: the rooms were filled as I entered the drawing-room. For a few moments I could not help feeling strongly the full influence of the splendid scene before me. The undoubted evidences of rank and wealth that meet the eye on every side, in London life, are very striking. The splendour of the women's dress — their own beauty — a certain air of haughty bearing, peculiarly English — a kind of conscious superiority to the rest of the world marks them; and in their easy, unembarrassed, steady glance, you read the proud spirit of Albion's "haughty dames." This alone was very different from the laughing spirit of Erin's daughters — their "*espiègle*" looks and smiling lips. The men, too, were so dissimilar: their reserved and stately carriage, their low voices, and deferential but composed manner, contrasting strongly with Irish volubility, quickness, and gesticulation. I stood unnoticed and alone for some time, quietly observant of the scene before me, and as I heard name after name announced, many of them the greatest and the highest in the land, there was no semblance of excitement as they entered — no looks of admiring wonder as they passed on, and mingled with the crowd. This showed me I was in a mighty city, where the chief spirits that ruled the age moved daily before the public eye; and again I thought of Dublin, where some third-rate notoriety would have been

hailed with almost acclamation, and lionized to the "top of his bent."

I could remember but few of those around, and even they had either forgotten me altogether, or, having no recollection of my absence, saluted me with the easy *nonchalance* of one who is seen every evening of his life.

"How are you, Hinton?" said one, with something more of warmth than the rest. "I have not met you for some weeks past."

"No," said I, smiling, "I have been nearly a year from home."

"Ah, indeed! In Spain?"

"No, in Ireland!"

"In Ireland! How odd!"

"Who has been in Ireland?" said a low, plaintive voice, turning round as she spoke — my lady mother stood before me. "I should like to hear something — but, dear me, this must be John!" and she held out her jewelled hand towards me.

"My dear mother, I am so happy to see you look so very well —"

"No, no, my dear," said she, sighing, "don't speak of that. When did you arrive? — I beg your royal highness's pardon — I hope you have not forgotten your *protégé*, my son."

I bowed reverently as a large, full, handsome man, with bald head and a most commanding expression, drew himself up before me.

"No, Madam, I have not forgotten him, I assure you!" was the reply, as he returned my salute with marked coldness, and passed on.

Before Lady Charlotte could express her surprise at such an unlooked-for mark of displeasure, my father, who had just heard of my arrival, came up.

“Jack, my dear fellow, I am glad to see you. How large you have grown, boy, and how brown!”

The warm welcome of his manly voice, the affectionate grasp of his strong hand, rallied me at once, and I cared little for the looks of king or kaiser at that moment. He drew his arm within mine, and led me through the rooms to a small boudoir, where a party at cards were the only occupants.

“Here we shall be tolerably alone for a little while, at least,” said he; “and now, my lad, tell me every thing about you.”

In less than half an hour I ran over the principal events of my life in Ireland, omitting only those in which Miss Bellew bore a part. On this account my rupture with Lord de Vere was only imperfectly alluded to; and I could perceive that my father’s brow became contracted, and his look assumed a severer expression, at this part of my narrative.

“You have not been very explicit, Jack, about this business; and this it is which I am really uneasy about. I have never known you do a mean or a shabby thing—I will never suspect you of one. So now let me clearly understand the ground of this quarrel.”

There was a tone of command in his voice as he said this which decided me at once, and without further hesitation I resolved on laying every thing before him. Still I knew not how to begin—the mention of Louisa’s name alone staggered me, and for a second or two I stammered and looked confused.

Unlike his wonted manner, my father looked impatient — almost angry. At last, when seeing that my agitation only increased upon me, and my difficulty grew each moment greater, he looked me sternly in the face, and with a voice full of meaning, said —

“Tell me every thing — I cannot bear to doubt you. Was this a play transaction?”

“A play transaction! No, Sir, nothing like it.”

“Was there not a bet — some disputed wager — mixed up in it?”

“Yes, there was a wager, Sir; but —”

Before I could conclude my father pressed his hand against his eyes, and a faint sigh broke from him.

“But hear me out, Sir. The wager was none of mine.”

In a few moments I ran over the whole circumstances of De Vere's bet, his conduct to Miss Bellew, and my own subsequent proceedings; but when I came to the mention of O'Grady's name, he stopped me suddenly, and said —

“Major O'Grady, however, did not approve of your conduct in the affair.”

“O'Grady! He was my friend all through it.”

My father remained silent for a few minutes, and then in a low voice added —

“There has been misrepresentation here.”

The words were not well spoken when Lord Dudley de Vere, with my cousin Lady Julia on his arm, came up. The easy *nonchalance* of his manner, the tone of quiet indifference he assumed, were well known to me; but I was in nowise prepared for the look of insufferable, patronizing impertinence he had now put on. My cousin, more beautiful far than ever I had seen her, took off

my attention from him, and I turned with a feeling of half-pride, half-wonder to pay my respects to her. Dressed in the most perfect taste of the fashion, her handsome features wore the assured and tranquil expression which conscious beauty gives. And here let no inexperienced observer rashly condemn the placid loveliness of the queen of beauty — the sanctioned belle of fashionable life; it is, indeed, very different from the artless loveliness of innocent girlhood; but its claim is not less incontestible. The features, like the faculties, can be cultivated; and when no unnatural effort suggests the expression, who shall say that the mind habitually exercised in society of the highest and most gifted circle, will not impart a more elevated character to the look, than when the unobtrusive career of every-day life flows on calm and unruffled, steeping the soul in a dreary monotony, and calling for no effort save of the commonest kind. Julia's was indeed splendid beauty: the lustrous brilliancy of her dark blue eyes, shaded by long black lashes — the perfect contour of her cheeks — her full short lips, slightly, so slightly curled, you knew not if it were not more smile than sarcasm — the low tones of her voice were rich and musical, and her carriage and demeanour possessed all the graceful elegance which is only met with in the society of great cities. Her manner was most frank and cordial: she held out her hand to me at once, and looked really glad to see me. After a few brief words of recognition, she turned towards De Vere —

“I shall ask you to excuse me, my lord, this set. It is so long since I have seen my cousin.”

He bowed negligently, muttered something carelessly about the next waltz, and with a familiar nod to

me, lounged away. O'Grady's caution about this man's attentions to Julia at once came to my mind, and the easy tone of his manner towards her alarmed me; but I had no time for reflection, as she took my arm and sauntered down the room.

"And so, *mon cher* cousin, you have been leading a very wild life of it — fighting duels, riding steeple-chases, breaking your own bones and ladies' hearts, in a manner exceedingly Irish," said Julia with a smile, into which not a particle of her habitual raillery entered.

"From your letter I can learn, Julia, a very strange account of my doings must have reached my friends here. Except from yourself I have met with scarcely any thing but cold looks since my arrival."

"Oh, never mind that — people will talk, you know. For my part, Jack, I never will believe you any thing but what I have always known you. The heaviest charge I have heard against you is that of trifling with a poor girl's affections; and as I know that the people who spread these rumours generally don't know at which side either the trifling or the affection resides, why I think little about it."

"And has this been said of me?"

"To be sure it has, and ten times as much. As to your gambling sins, there is no end to their enormity. A certain Mr. Rooney, I think the name is, a noted play-man."

"How absurd, Julia! Mr. Rooney never played in his life; nor have I, except in the casual way every one does in a drawing-room."

"*N'importe* — you are a lady-killer and a gambler. Now as to count number three — for being a jockey?"

"My dear Julia, if you saw my steeple-chase you'd acquit me of that."

"Indeed I did hear," said she roguishly, "that you acquitted yourself admirably — but still you won. And then we come to the great offence — your quarrelsome habits. We heard, it is true, that you behaved, as it is called, very honourably, &c.: but really duelling is so detestable —"

"Come, come, fair cousin, let us talk of something besides my delinquencies. What do you think of my friend O'Grady?"

I said this suddenly, by way of reprisal; but to my utter discomfiture, she replied with perfect calmness —

"I rather was amused with him at first. He is very odd — very unlike other people — but Lady Charlotte took him up so, and we had so much of him here, I grew somewhat tired of him. He was, however, very fond of you, and you know that made up for much with us all."

There was a tone of sweetness and almost of deep interest in these few last words that made my heart thrill, and unconsciously I pressed her arm closer to my side, and felt the touch returned. Just at the instant my father came forward accompanied by another, who I soon perceived was the royal duke that had received me so coldly a few minutes before. His frank, manly face was now all smiles, and his bright eye glanced from my fair cousin to myself with a quick, meaning expression.

"Another time, general, will do quite as well. I say, Mr. Hinton, call on me to-morrow morning about ten, will you? I have something to say to you."

I bowed deeply in reply, and he passed on.

"And let me see you after breakfast," said Julia in a half whisper, as she turned towards De Vere, who now came forward to claim her for the waltz.

My father, too, mixed with the crowd, and I felt myself alone and a stranger in what should have been my home. A kind of cold thrill came over me as I thought how unlike was my welcome to what it would have been in Ireland; for although I felt that in my father's manner towards me there was no want of affection or kindness, yet somehow I missed the exuberant warmth and ready cordiality I had latterly been used to; and soon turned away, sad and disappointed, to seek my own room.

CHAPTER XX.

An unhappy disclosure.

"WHAT!" cried I, as I awoke the next morning, and looked with amazement at the figure who waddled across the room with a boot in either hand. "What, not Corny Delany, surely?"

"Ugh, that same," said he, with a cranky croak; "I don't wonder ye don't know me; hardship's telling on me every day."

Now really, in vindication of my father's household, in which Sir Corny had been domesticated for the last two months, I must observe, that the alteration in his appearance was not exactly such as to justify his remark; on the contrary, he had grown fatter, and more ruddy, and looked in far better case than I had ever seen him: his face, however, most perseveringly preserved its habitual sour and crabbed expression, rather increased, than otherwise, by his improved condition.

"So, Corny, you are not comfortable here I find."

"Comfortable! The ways of this place would kill the Danes! Nothing but ringing bells from morning till night; carriages drivin' like wind up to the door; and bang, bang away at the rapper: then more ringing to let them out again; and bells for breakfast, and for luncheon, and the hall dinner; and then the sight of vi'tals that's wasted; meat, and fish, and fowl, and vegetables, without end. Ugh, the haythins, the Turks; eating and drinking as if the world was all their own."

"Well, apparently they take good care of you in that respect."

"Devil a bit of care; here it's every man for himself; but I'll give warning on Saturday; sorrow one o' me 'ill be kilt for the like of them."

"You prefer Ireland, then, Corny."

"Who said I did?" said he snappishly; "isn't it as bad there! Ugh, ugh, the captain won't rest asy in his grave, after the way he trated *me*! leaving me here alone and dissolate in this place, amongst strangers."

"Well, you must confess, the country is not so bad."

"And why would I confess it; what's in it that I don't mislike? Is it the heap of houses, and the smoke, and the devil's noise that's always going on that I'd like? Why isn't it peaceful and quiet like Dublin?"

And as I conversed further with him, I found that all his dislikes proceeded from the discrepancy he everywhere discovered, from what he had been accustomed to in Ireland; and which, without liking, he still preferred to our Saxon observances: the few things he saw worthy of praise, being borrowed or stolen from his own side of the channel; and in this, his ingenuity was striking, inasmuch that the very trees in Woburn-

park owed their goodness to the owner having been once a lord-lieutenant in Ireland; where, as Corny expressed it, "devil thank him to have fine trees; hadn't he the pick of the Phaynix!"

I knew that candour formed a most prominent feature in Mr. Delany's character, and consequently had little difficulty in ascertaining his opinion of every member of my family; indeed, to do him justice, no one ever required less of what is called pumping. His judgment on things and people flowed from him without effort or restraint, so that ere half an hour elapsed, he had expatiated on my mother's pride and vanity; apostrophized my father's hastiness and determination; and was quite prepared to enter upon a critical examination of my cousin Julia's failings; concerning whom, to my astonishment, he was not half so lenient as I expected.

"Arrah, isn't she like the rest of them, coorting one day with Captain Phil, and another with the young lord there, and then laughing at them both with the ould duke that comes here to dinner. She thinks I don't be minding her; but didn't I see her taking myself off one day on paper; making a drawing of me, as if I was a baste! Maybe there 's worse nor me," said the little man, looking down upon his crooked shins and large knee-joints with singular complacency; "and maybe she 'd get one of them yet." A harsh cackle, the substitute for a laugh, closed this speech.

"Breakfast on the table, Sir," said a servant, tapping gently at the door.

"I'll engage it is, and will be till two o'clock, when they 'll be calling out for luncheon," said Corny, turning up the whites of his eyes, as though the profligate

waste of the house was a sin he wished to wash his hands of; "that wasn't the way at his honour the *Jidge's*; he'd never taste a bit from morning till night; and many a man he'd send to his long account in the meantime. Ugh! I wish I was back there."

"I have spent many happy days in Ireland, too," said I, scarce following him in more than the general meaning of his speech.

A fit of coughing from Corny interrupted his reply, but as he left the room I could hear his muttered meditations, something in this strain: — "Happy days, indeed; a dacent life you led! tramping about the country with a fool! horse-riding and fighting! ugh!"

I found my cousin in the breakfast-room alone; my father had already gone out; and as Lady Charlotte never left her room before three or four o'clock, I willingly took the opportunity of our *tête-à-tête*, to inquire into the cause of the singular reception I had met with, and to seek an explanation, if so might be, of the viceroy's change towards me since his visit to England.

Julia entered frankly and freely into the whole matter, with the details of which, though evidently not trusting me to the full, she was somehow perfectly conversant.

"My dear John," said she, "your whole conduct in Ireland has been much mistaken —"

"Calumniated, apparently, were the better word, Julia," said I hastily.

"Nay, hear me out: it is so easy when people have no peculiar reasons to vindicate another — to misconstrue — perhaps condemn. It is so much the way of the world, to look at things in their worst light, that

I am sure you will see no particular ingenuity was required, to make your career in Dublin appear a wild one, and your life in the country still more so. Now you are growing impatient; you are getting angry; so I shall stop."

"No, no, Julia; a thousand pardons if a passing shade of indignation did show itself in my face. Pray go on."

"Well, then, when a young gentleman, whose exclusive leanings were even a little quizzed here — there, no impatience! — condescends at one spring to frequent third-rate people's houses; falls in love with a niece, or daughter, or a something there; plays high among riotous associates; makes rash wagers; and fights with his friends, who endeavour to rescue him —"

"Thank you, Julia — a thousand thanks, sweet cousin. The whole narrative and its author are palpably before me."

A deep blush covered her cheek as I rose hastily from my chair.

"John, dear John, sit down again," said she, "I have only been in jest all this time. You surely do not suppose me silly enough to credit one word of all this."

"It must have been told you, however," said I, fixing my eyes on her as I spoke.

The redness of her cheek grew deeper, and her confusion increased to a painful extent as, taking my hand in hers, she said in a low, soft voice —

"I have been very, very foolish; but you will promise me never to remember — at least never to act upon — the —"

The words became fainter and fainter as she spoke, and at last died away inaudibly; and suddenly there shot across my mind the passage in O'Grady's letter — the doubt, once suggested, gained strength at every moment — she loved De Vere. I will not attempt to convey the conflicting storm of passion this thought stirred up within me. I turned towards her. Her head was thrown gently back, and her deep blue lustrous eyes were fixed on me as if waiting my reply. A tear rolled heavily along her cheek — it was the first I ever saw her shed. Pressing her hand to my lips, I muttered the words — "Trust me, Julia," and left the room.

"Sir George wishes to see you, Sir, in his own room," said a servant, as I stood stunned and overcome by the discovery I had made of my cousin's affection. I had no time given me for further reflection as I followed him to my father's room.

"Sit down, Jack," said my father, as he turned the key in the door, "I wish to talk with you alone, here. I have been with the Duke this morning; a little explanation has satisfied him that your conduct was perfectly irreproachable in Ireland: he writes by this post to the viceroy to make the whole thing clear, and indeed he offered to reinstate you at once, which I refused however. Now to something graver still, my boy, and which I wish I could spare you — but it cannot be."

As he spoke these words, he leaned his head in both his hands, and was silent. A confused, imperfect sense of some impending bad news rendered me motionless and still, and I waited without speaking. When my father lifted up his head, his face was pale and careworn, and an expression such as long illness leaves

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had usurped the strong and manly character of his countenance.

"Come, my boy, I must not keep you longer in suspense. Fortune has dealt hardly with me since we parted. Jack, I am a beggar!"

A convulsive gulph, and a rattling sound in the throat, followed the words; and for a second or two his fixed looks and purple colour made me fear a fit was approaching. But in a few minutes he recovered his calmness, and proceeded, but still with a broken and tremulous voice, to relate the circumstances of his altered fortune.

It appeared that many British officers of high rank had involved themselves deeply in a loan to the Spanish Government, under the faith of speedy repayment. The varying chances of the peninsular struggle had given this loan all the character of a gambling speculation, the skill in which consisted in the anticipation of the result of the war we were then engaged in. My father's sanguine hopes of ultimate success induced him to enter deeply in the speculation, from which, having once engaged in, there was no retreat. Thousand after thousand followed, to secure the sum already advanced; and at last, hard pressed by the increasing demands for money, and confident that the first turn of fortune would lead to repayment, he had made use of the greater part of my cousin Julia's fortune, whose guardian he was, and in whose hands this trust-money had been left. My cousin would come of age in about four months, at which time she would be eighteen; and then, if the money were not forthcoming, the consequences were utter ruin, with the terrific blow of blasted character and reputation.

There was a sum of ten thousand pounds settled on me by my grandfather, which I at once offered to place at his disposal.

"Alas, my poor fellow! I have advanced already upwards of thirty thousand of Julia's fortune! No, no, Jack; I have thought much over the matter; there is but one way of escaping from this difficulty. By disposing of these bonds at considerable loss, I shall be enabled to pay Julia's money. This will leave us little better than above actual want: still it must be done. I shall solicit a command abroad; they'll not refuse me, I know. Lady Charlotte must retire to Bath, or some quiet place, which in my absence will appear less remarkable. Strict economy and time will do much. And as to yourself, I know that having once learned what you have to look to, I shall have no cause of complaint on your score: the Duke has promised to take care of you. And now my heart is lighter than it has been for some months past."

Before my father had ceased speaking, the shock of his news had gradually subsided with me, and I was fully intent on the details by which he hoped to escape his embarrassments.

My mother was my first thought. Lady Charlotte, I knew, could never encounter her changed condition; she was certain to sink under the very shock of it.

My father, however, supposed that she need not be told its full extent; that by management the circumstance should be gradually made known to her; and he hoped, too, her interest in her husband and son, both absent from her, would withdraw her thoughts in great measure from the routine of fashionable life, and fix them in a channel more homely and domestic. "Be-

sides," added he, with more animation of voice, "they may offer me some military appointment in the colonies, where she could accompany me, and this will prevent an exposure. And, after all, Jack, there is nothing else for it." As he said this he fixed his eyes on me, as though rather asking than answering the question.

Not knowing what to reply, I was silent.

"You were fond of Julia, as a boy," said he, carelessly.

The blood rushed to my cheek, as I answered, "Yes, Sir; but — but —"

"But you have outgrown that," added he, with a smile.

"Not so much, Sir, as that she has forgotten me. In fact, I believe we are excellent cousins."

"And it is not now, my dear boy, I would endeavour to make you more to each other. What is not a union of inclination, shall never be one of sordid interest; besides, Jack, why should we not take the field together? — the very thought of it makes me feel young enough."

I saw his lip quiver as he spoke, and unable to bear more, I wrung his hand warmly, and hurried away.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Horse Guards.

I WILL not say that my reverse of fortune did not depress me; indeed, the first blow fell heavily; but that once past, a number of opposing motives rallied my courage and nerved my heart. My father, I knew, relied on me in this crisis to support his own strength; I had learned to care less for extravagant habits and

expensive tastes, by living among those who accorded them little sympathy, and less respect; besides, if my changed career excluded me from the race of fashion, it opened the brilliant path of a soldier's life before me. And now every hour seemed an age, until I should find myself among the gallant fellows who were winning their laurels in the battle-fields of the Peninsula.

According to the Duke's appointment of the preceding evening, I found myself, at ten o'clock, punctually awaiting my turn to be introduced, in the ante-chamber of the Horse Guards. The room was crowded with officers in full dress; some old white-haired generals of division coming daily for years past to solicit commands, their fitness for which lay only in their own doating imaginations; some, broken by sickness and crippled with wounds, were seeking colonial appointments they never could live to reach; hale and stout men in the prime of life were there also, entreating exchanges which should accommodate their wives and daughters, who preferred Bath or Cheltenham to the banks of the Tagus or the snows of Canada. Among these, however, were many fine soldier-like fellows, whose only request was to be sent where hard knocks were going, careless of the climate, and regardless of the cause. Another class were thinly sprinkled around; young officers of the staff, many of them delicate, effeminate-looking figures, herding scrupulously together, and never condescending, by word or look, to acknowledge their brethren about them. In this knot De Vere was conspicuous, by the loud tone of his voice, and the continued titter of his unmeaning laugh. I have already mentioned the consummate ease with which he

could apparently forget all unpleasant recollections, and accost the man whom he should have blushed to meet. Now he exhibited this power in perfection: saluting me across the room with a familiar motion of his hand, he called out —

“Ah, Hinton, you here too? Sick of Ireland; I knew it would come to that; looking for something near town?”

A cold negative, and a colder bow, was my only answer.

Nothing abashed by this; indeed, to all seeming, quite indifferent to it, he continued —

“Bad style of thing, Dublin; couldn’t stand those confounded talkers, with their old jokes from circuit. You were horribly bored, too; I saw it.”

“I beg, my lord,” said I, in a tone of seriousness, the best exchange I could assume for the deep annoyance I felt — “I beg that you will not include me in your opinions respecting Ireland; I opine we differ materially in our impressions on that country, and perhaps not without reason too.” These latter words I spoke with marked emphasis, and fixing my eyes steadily on him.

“Very possibly,” lisped he, as coolly as before. “I left it without regret; you apparently ought to be there still: ha, ha, ha, he has it there I think.”

The blood mounted to my face and temples as I heard these words, and stepping close up beside him, I said slowly and distinctly —

“I thought, Sir, that one lesson might have taught you with whom these liberties were practicable.”

As I said thus much, the door opened, and his Grace the Duke of York appeared. Abashed at having

so far forgotten where I was, I stood motionless and crimson for shame. Lord Dudley, on the contrary, bowed reverently to his royal highness, without the slightest evidence of discomposure or irritation, his easy smile curling his lip.

The Duke turned from one to the other of us without speaking; his dark eyes piercing, as it were, into our very hearts. "Lord Dudley de Vere," said he at length, "I have signed your appointment. Mr. Hinton, I am sorry to find that the voice I have heard more than once within the last five minutes, in an angry tone, was yours. Take care, Sir, that this forgetfulness does not grow upon you. The colonel of the twenty-seventh is not the person to overlook it, I promise you."

"If your royal highness —"

"I must entreat you to spare me any explanations. You are gazetted to the twenty-seventh. I hope you will hold yourself in readiness for immediate embarkation. Where's the detachment, Sir Howard?"

"At Chatham, your royal highness," replied an old officer behind the Duke's shoulder. At the same moment his Grace passed through the room, conversing as he went with different persons about him.

As I turned away, I met Lord Dudley's eyes; they were rivetted on me with an expression of triumphant malice I had never seen in them before, and I hurried homeward with a heart crushed and wounded.

I have but one reason for the mention of this trivial incident: it is to show how often the studied courtesy, the well-practised deception that the fashion of the world teaches, will prevail over the heartfelt, honest indignation which deep feeling evinces; and what a

vast superiority the very affectation of temper confers, in the judgment of others, who stand by the game of life, and care nothing for the players at either side.

Let no one suspect me of lauding the mockery of virtue in what I say here. I would merely impress on the young man who can feel for the deep sorrow and abasement I suffered, the importance of the attainment of that self-command, of that restraint over any outbreak of passion, when the very semblance of it ensures respect and admiration.

It is very difficult to witness with indifference the preference of those we have once loved, for some other person; still more so, when that other chances to be one we dislike, the breach of affection seems then tinged with a kind of betrayal: we call to mind how once we swayed the temper and ruled the thoughts of her who now has thrown off her allegiance; we feel, perhaps for the first time too, how forgotten are all our lessons; how dead is all our wonted influence; we remember when the least word, the slightest action, bent beneath our will; when our smile was happiness, and our very sadness a reproof; and now we see ourselves unminded and neglected, with no more liberty to advise, no more power to control, than the merest stranger of the passing hour. What a wound to our self-love!

That my cousin Julia loved De Vere, O'Grady's suspicions had already warned me; the little I had seen of her since my return, strengthened the impression; while his confident manner and assured tone, confirmed my worst fears. In my heart I knew how utterly unworthy he was of such a girl; but then, if he had already won her affections, my knowledge came

too late: besides, the changed circumstances of my own fortune, which must soon become known, would render my interference suspected, and consequently, of no value; and after all, if I determined on such a course, what allegation could I bring against him, which he could not explain away, as the mere levity of the young officer, associating among those he looked down upon and despised.

Such were some of my reflections, as I slowly returned homewards from the Horse Guards. As I arrived, a travelling-carriage stood at the door; boxes, imperials, and cap-cases littered the hall and steps; servants were hurrying back and forward, and Mademoiselle Clemence, my mother's maid, with a poodle under one arm, and a macaw's cage in the other, was adding to the confusion, by directions in a composite language, that would have astonished Babel itself.

"What means all this?" said I. "Is Lady Charlotte leaving town?"

"Mi ladi va partir —"

"Her ladyship's going to Hastings, Sir," said the butler, interrupting. "Dr. Y— has been here this morning, and recommends an immediate change of air for her ladyship."

"Is Sir George in the house?"

"No, Sir, he's just gone out with the doctor."

"Ah," thought I, "this then is a concerted measure, to induce my mother to leave town. Lady Julia at home?"

"Yes, Sir, in the drawing-room."

"Whose horse is that with the groom?"

"Lord Dudley de Vere's, Sir; he's up stairs."

Already had I turned to go to the drawing-room, when I heard these words. Suddenly a faint, half-sick feeling came over me, and I hastened up stairs to my own room, actually dreading to meet any one as I went.

The blank future before me never seemed so cheerless as at that moment: separated, without a chance of ever meeting, from the only one I ever really loved; tortured by my doubts of her feeling for me — for even now, what would I not have given to know she loved me; my worldly prospects ruined; without a home; my cousin Julia, the only one who retained either an interest in me, or seemed to care for me, about to give her hand to the man I hated and despised.

“How soon! and I shall be alone in the world,” thought I; and already the cold selfishness of isolation presented itself to my mind.

A gentle tap came to the door; I opened it; it was a message from Lady Charlotte, requesting to see me in her room. As I passed the door of the drawing-room, I heard Lady Julia and Lord de Vere talking and laughing together: he was, as usual, “so amusing,” as my mother’s letter called him; doubtless, relating my hasty and intemperate conduct at the Horse Guards; for an instant I stopped irresolute as to whether I should not break suddenly in, and disconcert his lordship’s practical coolness by a disclosure: my better reason prevented me, and I passed on. Lady Charlotte was seated in a deep arm-chair, inspecting the packing of various articles of toilet and jewellery which were going on around her, her cheek somewhat flushed from even this small excitement.

"Ah, dearest John, how d'ye do? — Find a chair somewhere, and sit down by me; you see what confusion we're in; Dr. Y — found there was not an hour to spare; the heart he suspects to be sympathetically engaged — don't put that Chantilly veil there, I shall never get at it — and he advises Hastings for the present; he's coming with us, however — I'll wear that ring, Clemence — and I must insist at his looking at you; you are very pale to-day, and dark under the eyes; have you any pain in the side?"

"None whatever, my dear mother; I'm quite well."

"Pain is, however, a late symptom; my attack began with an — a sense of — it was rather — Has Rundal not sent back that bracelet? How very provoking! Could you call there, dear John; that tiresome man never minds the servants. It's just on your way to the club, or the Horse Guards, or somewhere."

I could scarce help a smile, as I promised not to forget the commission.

"And now, my dear, how did his Grace receive you? you saw him this morning."

"My interview was quite satisfactory on the main point; I am appointed to the twenty-seventh."

"Why not on the staff, dear John? You surely don't mean to leave England, having been abroad already — in Ireland I mean; it's very hard to expect you to go so soon again. Lady Jane Colthurst's son has never been farther from her than Knightsbridge; and I'm sure I don't see why we are to be treated worse than her."

"But my own wish —"

"Your own wish, my dear, could never be to give me uneasiness, which, I assure you, you did very con-

siderably while in Ireland: the horrid people you made acquaintance with — my health, I'm certain, could never sustain a repetition of the shock I experienced then."

My mother leaned back and closed her eyes, as if some very dreadful circumstance was passing across her memory; and I, half ashamed of the position to which she would condemn me, was silent.

"There, that *aigrette* will do very well there, I'm sure; I don't know why you are putting in all these things; I shall never want them again, in all likelihood."

The depressed tone in which these words were spoken did not affect me much, for I knew well, from long habit, how my mother loved to dwell on the possibility of that event, the bare suggestion of which, from another, she couldn't have endured.

Just at this moment Julia entered in her travelling dress; a shawl thrown negligently across her shoulders.

"I hope I have not delayed you. John, are we to have your company too?"

"No, my dear," said my mother languidly, "he's going to leave us. Some foolish notion of active service —"

"Indeed," said Julia, not waiting for the conclusion of the speech — "Indeed! She drew near me, and as she did so her colour became heightened, and her dark eyes grew darker and more meaning. "You never told me this."

"I only knew it about an hour ago myself," replied I coolly; "and when I was about to communicate my news to you, I found you were engaged with a visitor — Lord de Vere, I think."

"Ah, yes, very true, he was here," she said quickly, and then perceiving that my eyes were fixed upon her, she turned away her head hastily, and in evident confusion.

"Dear me, is it so late?" said my mother with a sigh. "I have some calls to make yet. Don't you think, John, you could take them off my hands? It's only to drop a card at Lady Blair's, and you could ask if Caroline's better — though, poor thing! she can't be of course. Doctor Y— says her malady is exactly my own; and then if you are passing Long's, tell Sir Charles that our whist-party is put off — perhaps Gramont has told him already. You may mention to Saunders that I shall not want the horses till I return, and say I detest grays, they are so like city people's equipages; and wait an instant," — here her ladyship took a small ivory memorandum tablet from the table, and began reading from it a list of commissions, some of them most ludicrously absurd. In the midst of the catalogue my father entered hastily with his watch in his hand.

"You'll be dreadfully late on the road, Charlotte, and you forget Y— must be back here early to-morrow."

"So I had forgotten it," said she with some animation, "but we're quite ready now — Clemence has done every thing, I think. Come, John, give me your arm, my dear — Julia always takes this side. Are you certain it won't rain, Sir George?"

"I really cannot be positive," said my father smiling.

"I'm sure there's thunder in the air," rejoined my mother; "my nerves would never bear a storm."

Some dreadful catastrophe in the West Indies, where an earthquake had swallowed up a whole population,

occurred to her memory at the instant, and the possibility of something similar occurring between Seven Oaks and Tunbridge seemed to engross her entire attention. By this time we reached the hall, where the servants, drawn up in double file, stood in respectful silence. My mother's eyes were, however, directed upon a figure which occupied the place next the door, and whose costume certainly was strangely at variance with the accurate liveries about him. An old white great coat with some twenty capes reaching nearly to the ground — for the garment had been originally destined for a much larger person — a glazed hat, fastened down with a handkerchief passed over it and tied under the chin, and a blackthorn stick with a little bundle at the end of it, were the most remarkable equipments.

"What is it? What can it be doing there?" said my mother in a Siddons' tone of voice.

"What is it? Corny Delany, no less," croaked out the little man in the crankiest tone of his harsh voice. "It's what remains of me, at last!"

"Oh, yes," said Julia, bursting into a laugh, "Corny's coming as my body-guard. He'll sit in the rumble with Thomas."

"What a shocking figure it is," said my mother, surveying him through her glass.

"Time doesn't improve either of us," said Corny, with the grin of a demon — happily the observation was only heard by myself. "Is it in silk stockings I'd be trapesing about the roads all night, with the rheumatiz in the small of my back — ugh, the haythens!"

My mother was at length seated in the carriage, with Julia beside her — the hundred and one petty annoyances to make travelling uncomfortable, by way

of rendering it supportable, around her; Corny had mounted to his place beside Thomas, who regarded him with a look of as profound contempt as a sleek, well-fed pointer would confer upon some mangy mongrel of the road-side; a hurried good-by from my mother, a quick, short glance from Julia, a whisper lost in the crash of the wheels, and they were gone.

CHAPTER XXII.

The retreat from Burgos.

FEW men have gone through life, without passing through certain periods which, although not marked by positive misfortune, were yet so impressed by gloom and despondence, that their very retrospect is saddening. Happy it is for us that in after days our memory is but little retentive of these. We remember the shadows that darkened over the landscape; but we forget in great part their cause and their duration, and perhaps even sometimes are disposed to smile at the sources of grief to which long habit of the world and its ways would have made us callous.

I was almost alone in the world—bereft of fortune, separated irrevocably from the only one I loved, and by whom I had reason to think, my affection was returned. In that home to which I should have looked for fondness, I found only gloom and misfortune: my mother grown insensible to every thing save some frivolous narrative of her own health; my father, once high-spirited and free-hearted, care-worn, depressed, and broken; my cousin, my early play-fellow, half sweetheart and half sister, bestowing her heart and affections on one so unworthy of her. All lost to me: and at a time, too, when the heart is too weak and

tender to stand alone, but must cling to something, or it sinks upon the earth, crushed and trodden upon.

I looked back upon my past life, and thought over the happy hours I had passed in the wild west, roaming through its deep valleys and over its heath-clad mountains. I thought of her, my companion through many a long summer-day along the rocky shore, against which the white waves were ever beating, watching the sea-birds careering full many a fathom deep below us, mixing their shrill cries with the wilder plash of the ever restless sea; and how we dreamed away those hours, now half in sadness, now in bright hope of long years to come, and found ourselves thus wandering hand in hand, loved and loving; and then I looked out upon the bleak world before me, without an object to win, without a goal to strive at.

"Come, Jack," said my father, laying his hand on my shoulder, and startling me out of my reverie, "one piece of good fortune we have had. The Duke has given me the command at Chatham: some hint of my altered circumstances, it seems, had reached him, and without my applying, he most kindly sent for me and told me of my appointment. You must join the service companies of the twenty-seventh by to-morrow: they are under sailing orders, and no time is to be lost. I told his Grace, that for all your soft looks and smooth chin, there was no lack of spirit in your heart; and you must take an eagle, Jack, if you would keep up my credit."

Laughingly-spoken as these few words were, they somehow struck upon a chord that had long lay silent in my heart, and as suddenly awoke in me the burning

desire for distinction, and the ambitious thirst of military glory.

The next evening at sunset the transport weighed anchor and stood out to sea. A slight breeze off shore, and an ebb-tide, carried us gently away from land, and as night was falling I stood alone, leaning on the bulwarks, and looking fixedly on the faint shadows of the tall chalk-cliffs, my father's last words, "You must take an eagle, Jack!" still ringing in my ears, and sinking deeply into my heart.

Had my accidents by flood and field been more numerous and remarkable than they were, the recently-told adventures of my friend Charles O'Malley would prevent my giving them to the public. The subaltern of a marching regiment — a crack corps, it is true — I saw merely the ordinary detail of a campaigning life; and although my desire to distinguish myself rose each day higher, the greatest extent of my renown went no farther than the admiration of my comrades, that one so delicately nurtured and brought up should bear so cheerfully and well the roughings of a soldier's life; and my soubriquet of "Jack Hinton, the Guardsman," was earned among the stormy scenes and blood-stained fields of the Peninsula.

My first experiences of military life were indeed but little encouraging. I joined the army in the disastrous retreat from Burgos. What a shock to all my cherished notions of a campaign! How sadly different to my ideas of the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war! I remember well we first came up with the retiring forces on the morning of the 4th of November. The day broke heavily — masses of dark and weighty cloud drifted across the sky. The ground was

soaked with rain, and a cold, chilling wind swept across the bleak plain, and moaned dismally in the dark pine woods. Our party, which consisted of drafts from the fiftieth, twenty-seventh, and seventy-first regiments, were stationed in a few miserable hovels on the side of the high-road from Madrid to Labeyos. By a mistake of the way, we had missed a body of troops on the preceding day, and were now halted here in expectation of joining some of the corps retiring on the Portuguese frontier. Soon after daybreak a low rumbling sound, at first supposed to be the noise of distant cannonading, attracted our attention; but some stragglers coming up soon after, informed us that it proceeded from tumbrels and ammunition-waggons of Sir Lowry Cole's brigade then on the march. The news was scarcely communicated, when the head of a column appeared topping the hill.

As they came nearer, we remarked that the men did not keep their ranks, but strayed across the road from side to side; some carried their muskets by the sling, others on the shoulder; some leant on their companions, as though faint and sick; and many there were whose savage looks and bloated features denoted drunkenness. The uniforms were torn and ragged, several had no shoes, and some even had lost their caps and shakos, and wore handkerchiefs bound round their heads. Among these the officers were almost undistinguishable — fatigue, hardship, and privation had levelled them with the men; and discipline scarcely remained in that disorganized mass. On they came, their eyes bent only on the long vista of road that lay before them. Some, silent and sad, trudged on side by side; others, maddened by drink or wild with the ex-

citement of fever, uttered frightful and horrible ravings. Some flourished their bayonets, and threatened all within their reach; and denunciations of their officers, and open avowals of desertion were heard on every side as they went. The bugle sounded a halt as the column reached the little hamlet where we were stationed; and in a few seconds the road and the fields at either side were covered by the figures of the men, who threw themselves down on the spot where they stood, in every posture that weariness and exhaustion could suggest.

All the information we could collect was, that this force formed part of the rear-guard of the army; that the French under Marshal Soult were hotly in pursuit, having already driven in the cavalry outposts, and more than once throwing their skirmishers amongst our fellows. In a few minutes the bugle again sounded to resume the march; and however little disposed to yield to the dictates of discipline, old habit, stronger than even lawless insubordination, prevailed — the men rose, and, falling in with some semblance of order, continued their way. Nothing struck me more in that motley mass of ragged uniform and patched clothing, than the ferocious, almost savage expression of the soldiers as they marched past our better equipped and better disciplined party. Their dark scowl betokened deadly hate; and I could see the young men of our detachment quail beneath the insulting ruffianism of their gaze. Every now and then, some one or other would throw down his pack or knapsack to the ground, and with an oath asseverate his resolve to carry it no longer. Some even declared they would abandon their musquets; and more than one sat down by the way side, preferring

death or imprisonment from the enemy, to the horrors and severities of that dreadful march.

The Highland regiments and the Guards alone preserved their former discipline; the latter, indeed, had only lately joined the army, having landed at Corunna a few weeks previously, and were perfect in every species of equipment. Joining myself to a group of their officers, I followed in the march, and was enabled to learn some tidings of my friend O'Grady, who, I was glad to hear, was only a few miles in advance of us, with his regiment.

Towards three o'clock we entered a dark pine wood, through which the route continued for several miles. Here the march became extremely difficult, from the deep clayey soil, the worn and cut-up road, and more than all, the torrents of rain that swept along the narrow gorge, and threw a darkness, almost like night, over every thing. We plodded on gloomily, and scarcely speaking, when suddenly the galloping of horses was heard in the rear, and we were joined by Sir Edward Paget, who, with a single aid-de-camp, rode up to our division. After a few hurried questions to the officer in command, he wheeled his horse round, and rode back towards the next column, which, from some accidental delay, was yet two miles in the rear. The sound of the horses' hoofs were still ringing along the causeway, when a loud shout, followed by the sharp reports of pistol-firing, mingled with the voice. In an instant all was still as before, and save the crashing of the pine branches and the beating rain, no other sound was heard.

Our conjectures as to the cause of the firing were just making, when an orderly dragoon, bare-headed

and wounded, came up at the top of his horse's speed. The few hurried words he spoke in a half whisper to our commanding officer, were soon reported through the lines. Sir Edward Paget, our second in command, had been taken prisoner, carried away by a party of French cavalry, who were daring enough to dash in between the columns, which in no other retreat had they ventured to approach.

The temerity of our enemy, added to our own dispirited and defenceless condition, was the only thing wanting to complete our gloom and depression, and the march was now resumed in the dogged sullenness of despair.

Day followed day, and all the miseries of our state but increased with time, till on the morning of the 17th the town of Ciudad Rodrigo came in view, and the rumour spread that stores of all kinds would be served out to the famished troops.

By insubordination and intemperance, we had lost seven thousand men since the day the retreat from Burgos began, and although neither harassed by night marches nor excessive journeys — losing neither guns, ammunition, nor standards — yet was the memorable document addressed by Wellington to the officers commanding divisions, but too justly merited, concluding in these words: — “The discipline of every army, after a long and active campaign, becomes in some degree relaxed, but I am concerned to observe that the army under my command has fallen off in this respect to a greater degree than any army with which I have ever been, or of which I have ever read.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

A mishap.

IF I began my career as a soldier at one of the gloomiest periods of our peninsular struggle, I certainly was soon destined to witness one of the most brilliant achievements of our arms in the opening of the campaign of 1813.

On the 22nd of May the march began — that forward movement, for the hour of whose coming many a heart had throbbed, and many a bosom beat high. From Ciudad Rodrigo to the frontier, our way led through the scenes of former glory; and if the veterans of the army exulted at once again beholding the battle-fields where victory had crowned their arms, the new soldiers glowed with ambition to emulate their fame. As for myself, short as the period had been since I quitted England, I felt that my character had undergone a very great change: the wandering fancies of the boy had sobered down into the more fixed, determined passions of the man. The more I thought of the inglorious indolence of my former life, the stronger was now my desire to deserve a higher reputation than that of a mere loungeur about a court, the military accompaniment of a pageant. Happily for me, I knew not at the time how few opportunities for distinction are afforded by the humble position of a subaltern — how seldom occasions arise where, amid the mass around him, his name can win praise or honour. I knew not this; and my reverie by day, my dream by night, presented but one image — that of some bold, successful deed, by which I should be honourably known and

proudly mentioned; or my death be that of a brave soldier in the field of glory.

It may be remembered by my reader, that in the celebrated march by which Wellington opened that campaign — whose result was the expulsion of the French armies from the Peninsula — the British left, under the command of Graham, was always in advance of the main body; their route traversed the wild and dreary passes of the *Tras-os-Montes*, a vast expanse of country, with scarcely a road to be met with, and but few inhabitants; the solitary glens and gloomy valleys whose echoes had waked to no other sounds save those of the wild heron or the eagle, were now to resound with the thundering roll of artillery waggons, the clanking crash of cavalry columns, or the monotonous din of the infantry battalions, as from sun-rise to sun-set they poured along: now scaling the rugged height of some bold mountain; now disappearing among the wooded depths of some dark ravine.

Owing to a temporary appointment on the staff, I was continually passing and repassing between this portion of the army and the force under the immediate command of Lord Wellington. Starting at day-break, I have set off alone through these wild, untravelled tracts, where mountains rose in solemn grandeur, their dark sides, wooded with the gloomy cork-tree, or rent by some hissing torrent, whose splash was the only sound that broke the universal silence — now dashing on with speed across the grassy plain — now toiling along on foot, the bridle on my arm — I have seen the sun go down and never heard a human voice, nor seen the footsteps of a fellow-man: and yet, what charms had those lonely hours for me, and what a crowd of

Already had I turned to go to the drawing-room, when I heard these words. Suddenly a faint, half-sick feeling came over me, and I hastened up stairs to my own room, actually dreading to meet any one as I went.

The blank future before me never seemed so cheerless as at that moment: separated, without a chance of ever meeting, from the only one I ever really loved; tortured by my doubts of her feeling for me — for even now, what would I not have given to know she loved me; my worldly prospects ruined; without a home; my cousin Julia, the only one who retained either an interest in me, or seemed to care for me, about to give her hand to the man I hated and despised.

“How soon! and I shall be alone in the world,” thought I; and already the cold selfishness of isolation presented itself to my mind.

A gentle tap came to the door; I opened it; it was a message from Lady Charlotte, requesting to see me in her room. As I passed the door of the drawing-room, I heard Lady Julia and Lord de Vere talking and laughing together: he was, as usual, “so amusing,” as my mother’s letter called him; doubtless, relating my hasty and intemperate conduct at the Horse Guards; for an instant I stopped irresolute as to whether I should not break suddenly in, and disconcert his lordship’s practical coolness by a disclosure: my better reason prevented me, and I passed on. Lady Charlotte was seated in a deep arm-chair, inspecting the packing of various articles of toilet and jewellery which were going on around her, her cheek somewhat flushed from even this small excitement.

"Ah, dearest John, how d'ye do? — Find a chair somewhere, and sit down by me; you see what confusion we're in; Dr. Y — found there was not an hour to spare; the heart he suspects to be sympathetically engaged — don't put that Chantilly veil there, I shall never get at it — and he advises Hastings for the present; he's coming with us, however — I'll wear that ring, Clemence — and I must insist at his looking at you; you are very pale to-day, and dark under the eyes; have you any pain in the side?"

"None whatever, my dear mother; I'm quite well."

"Pain is, however, a late symptom; my attack began with an — a sense of — it was rather — Has Rundal not sent back that bracelet? How very provoking! Could you call there, dear John; that tiresome man never minds the servants. It's just on your way to the club, or the Horse Guards, or somewhere."

I could scarce help a smile, as I promised not to forget the commission.

"And now, my dear, how did his Grace receive you? you saw him this morning."

"My interview was quite satisfactory on the main point; I am appointed to the twenty-seventh."

"Why not on the staff, dear John? You surely don't mean to leave England, having been abroad already — in Ireland I mean; it's very hard to expect you to go so soon again. Lady Jane Colthurst's son has never been farther from her than Knightsbridge; and I'm sure I don't see why we are to be treated worse than her."

"But my own wish —"

"Your own wish, my dear, could never be to give me uneasiness, which, I assure you, you did very con-

siderably while in Ireland: the horrid people you made acquaintance with — my health, I'm certain, could never sustain a repetition of the shock I experienced then."

My mother leaned back and closed her eyes, as if some very dreadful circumstance was passing across her memory; and I, half ashamed of the position to which she would condemn me, was silent.

"There, that *aigrette* will do very well there, I'm sure; I don't know why you are putting in all these things; I shall never want them again, in all likelihood."

The depressed tone in which these words were spoken did not affect me much, for I knew well, from long habit, how my mother loved to dwell on the possibility of that event, the bare suggestion of which, from another, she couldn't have endured.

Just at this moment Julia entered in her travelling dress; a shawl thrown negligently across her shoulders.

"I hope I have not delayed you. John, are we to have your company too?"

"No, my dear," said my mother languidly, "he's going to leave us. Some foolish notion of active service —"

"Indeed," said Julia, not waiting for the conclusion of the speech — "Indeed! She drew near me, and as she did so her colour became heightened, and her dark eyes grew darker and more meaning. "You never told me this."

"I only knew it about an hour ago myself," replied I coolly; "and when I was about to communicate my news to you, I found you were engaged with a visitor — Lord de Vere, I think."

"Ah, yes, very true, he was here," she said quickly, and then perceiving that my eyes were fixed upon her, she turned away her head hastily, and in evident confusion.

"Dear me, is it so late?" said my mother with a sigh. "I have some calls to make yet. Don't you think, John, you could take them off my hands? It's only to drop a card at Lady Blair's, and you could ask if Caroline's better — though, poor thing! she can't be of course. Doctor Y— says her malady is exactly my own; and then if you are passing Long's, tell Sir Charles that our whist-party is put off — perhaps Gramont has told him already. You may mention to Saunders that I shall not want the horses till I return, and say I detest grays, they are so like city people's equipages; and wait an instant," — here her ladyship took a small ivory memorandum tablet from the table, and began reading from it a list of commissions, some of them most ludicrously absurd. In the midst of the catalogue my father entered hastily with his watch in his hand.

"You'll be dreadfully late on the road, Charlotte, and you forget Y— must be back here early to-morrow."

"So I had forgotten it," said she with some animation, "but we're quite ready now — Clemence has done every thing, I think. Come, John, give me your arm, my dear — Julia always takes this side. Are you certain it won't rain, Sir George?"

"I really cannot be positive," said my father smiling.

"I'm sure there's thunder in the air," rejoined my mother; "my nerves would never bear a storm."

Some dreadful catastrophe in the West Indies, where an earthquake had swallowed up a whole population,

occurred to her memory at the instant, and the possibility of something similar occurring between Seven Oaks and Tunbridge seemed to engross her entire attention. By this time we reached the hall, where the servants, drawn up in double file, stood in respectful silence. My mother's eyes were, however, directed upon a figure which occupied the place next the door, and whose costume certainly was strangely at variance with the accurate liveries about him. An old white great coat with some twenty capes reaching nearly to the ground — for the garment had been originally destined for a much larger person — a glazed hat, fastened down with a handkerchief passed over it and tied under the chin, and a blackthorn stick with a little bundle at the end of it, were the most remarkable equipments.

"What is it? What can it be doing there?" said my mother in a Siddons' tone of voice.

"What is it? Corny Delany, no less," croaked out the little man in the crankiest tone of his harsh voice. "It's what remains of me, at last!"

"Oh, yes," said Julia, bursting into a laugh, "Corny's coming as my body-guard. He'll sit in the rumble with Thomas."

"What a shocking figure it is," said my mother, surveying him through her glass.

"Time doesn't improve either of us," said Corny, with the grin of a demon — happily the observation was only heard by myself. "Is it in silk stockings I'd be trapesing about the roads all night, with the rheumatiz in the small of my back — ugh, the haythens!"

My mother was at length seated in the carriage, with Julia beside her — the hundred and one petty annoyances to make travelling uncomfortable, by way

of rendering it supportable, around her; Corny had mounted to his place beside Thomas, who regarded him with a look of as profound contempt as a sleek, well-fed pointer would confer upon some mangy mongrel of the road-side; a hurried good-by from my mother, a quick, short glance from Julia, a whisper lost in the crash of the wheels, and they were gone.

CHAPTER XXII.

The retreat from Burgos.

FEW men have gone through life, without passing through certain periods which, although not marked by positive misfortune, were yet so impressed by gloom and despondence, that their very retrospect is saddening. Happy it is for us that in after days our memory is but little retentive of these. We remember the shadows that darkened over the landscape; but we forget in great part their cause and their duration, and perhaps even sometimes are disposed to smile at the sources of grief to which long habit of the world and its ways would have made us callous.

I was almost alone in the world—bereft of fortune, separated irrevocably from the only one I loved, and by whom I had reason to think, my affection was returned. In that home to which I should have looked for fondness, I found only gloom and misfortune: my mother grown insensible to every thing save some frivolous narrative of her own health; my father, once high-spirited and free-hearted, care-worn, depressed, and broken; my cousin, my early play-fellow, half sweetheart and half sister, bestowing her heart and affections on one so unworthy of her. All lost to me: and at a time, too, when the heart is too weak and

tender to stand alone, but must cling to something, or it sinks upon the earth, crushed and trodden upon.

I looked back upon my past life, and thought over the happy hours I had passed in the wild west, roaming through its deep valleys and over its heath-clad mountains. I thought of her, my companion through many a long summer-day along the rocky shore, against which the white waves were ever beating, watching the sea-birds careering full many a fathom deep below us, mixing their shrill cries with the wilder plash of the ever restless sea; and how we dreamed away those hours, now half in sadness, now in bright hope of long years to come, and found ourselves thus wandering hand in hand, loved and loving; and then I looked out upon the bleak world before me, without an object to win, without a goal to strive at.

"Come, Jack," said my father, laying his hand on my shoulder, and startling me out of my reverie, "one piece of good fortune we have had. The Duke has given me the command at Chatham: some hint of my altered circumstances, it seems, had reached him, and without my applying, he most kindly sent for me and told me of my appointment. You must join the service companies of the twenty-seventh by to-morrow: they are under sailing orders, and no time is to be lost. I told his Grace, that for all your soft looks and smooth chin, there was no lack of spirit in your heart; and you must take an eagle, Jack, if you would keep up my credit."

Laughingly-spoken as these few words were, they somehow struck upon a chord that had long lay silent in my heart, and as suddenly awoke in me the burning

desire for distinction, and the ambitious thirst of military glory.

The next evening at sunset the transport weighed anchor and stood out to sea. A slight breeze off shore, and an ebb-tide, carried us gently away from land, and as night was falling I stood alone, leaning on the bulwarks, and looking fixedly on the faint shadows of the tall chalk-cliffs, my father's last words, "You must take an eagle, Jack!" still ringing in my ears, and sinking deeply into my heart.

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It may be remembered by my reader, that in the celebrated march by which Wellington opened that campaign — whose result was the expulsion of the French armies from the Peninsula — the British left, under the command of Graham, was always in advance of the main body; their route traversed the wild and dreary passes of the *Tras-os-Montes*, a vast expanse of country, with scarcely a road to be met with, and but few inhabitants; the solitary glens and gloomy valleys whose echoes had waked to no other sounds save those of the wild heron or the eagle, were now to resound with the thundering roll of artillery waggons, the clanking crash of cavalry columns, or the monotonous din of the infantry battalions, as from sun-rise to sun-set they poured along: now scaling the rugged height of some bold mountain; now disappearing among the wooded depths of some dark ravine.

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blissful thoughts and happy images they yet bring back to me! The dark glen, the frowning precipice, the clear rivulet, gurgling on amid the mossy stones, the long and tangled weeds that hung in festoons down some rocky cliff, through whose fissured sides the water fell in heavy drops into a little basin at its foot — all spoke to me of the happiest hours of my life, when, loved and loving, I wandered on the live-long day.

How often, as the day was falling, have I sat down to rest beneath some tall beech, gazing on the glorious expanse of mountain and valley, hill and plain, and winding river — all beneath me; and how, as I looked, have my thoughts wandered away from those to many a far-off mile; and then what doubts and hopes would crowd upon me. Was I forgotten? — had time and distance wiped away all memory of me? — was I as one she had never seen, or was she still to me as when we parted? In such moments as these how often have I recurred to our last meeting at the holy well; and still, I own it, some vague feeling of superstition has spoken hope to my heart, when reason alone had bid me despair.

It was at the close of a sultry day — the first of June, I shall not readily forget it — that overcome by fatigue I threw myself down beneath the shelter of a grove of acacias, and, tethering my horse with his bridle, fell into one of my accustomed reveries. The heat of the day, the drowsy hum of the summer insects, the very monotonous champ of my horse, feeding beside me — all conspired to make me sleepy, and I fell into a heavy slumber. My dreams, like my last-waking thoughts, were of home; but strangely enough, the scenes through which I had been travelling, the officers

with whom I was intimate, the wild guerilla chiefs, who from time to time crossed my path or shared my bivouack, were mixed up with objects and persons many a mile away; making that odd and incongruous collection which we so often experience in sleep.

A kind of low, unbroken sound, like the tramp of cavalry over grass, awoke me; but still, such was my drowsiness, that I was again about to relapse into sleep, when the sound of a manly voice, singing at the foot of the rock beneath me, fully aroused me. I started up, and, peeping cautiously over the head of the cliff, beheld to my surprise and terror, a party of French soldiers stretched upon the green sward around a fire. It was the first time I had ever seen the imperial troops, and notwithstanding the danger of my position, I felt a most unaccountable longing to creep nearer, and watch their proceedings. The sounds I had heard at first, became at this moment more audible; and on looking down the glen, I perceived a party of about twenty dragoons cantering up the valley. They were dressed in the uniform of the "Chasseurs Légers," and in their light blue jackets and silvered helmets had a most striking and picturesque effect. My astonishment at their appearance was not diminished by the figure who rode gaily along at their head. She was a young and pretty-looking girl, dressed in a blue frock, and jean trowsers: a light foraging cap, with the number of the regiment worked in silver on the front; a small canteen suspended from one shoulder by a black belt, completed her equipment; her hair of a glossy black, was braided richly at either side of her face, and a couple of bows of light blue attested a degree of coquetry the rest of her costume gave no evidence of. She rode "en ca-

valier;" and by the easy attitude in which she sat, and her steady hand on the bridle, denoted that the regimental riding school had contributed to her accomplishments. I had heard before of the Vivandières of the French army, but was in nowise prepared for the really pretty figure and costume I now beheld.

As the riding party approached, the others sprung to their feet, and drawing up in line performed a mock salute, which the young lady returned with perfect gravity; and then, carelessly throwing her bridle to the one nearest, dismounted. In a few moments the horses were picquetted; the packs were scattered about the grass — cooking utensils, provisions, and wine were distributed — and, amid a perfect din of merry voices and laughter, the preparations for dinner were commenced. Mademoiselle's part, on the whole, amused me not a little. Not engaging in any of the various occupations about her, she seated herself on a pile of cavalry cloaks at a little distance from the rest, and taking out a much-worn and well-thumbed-looking volume from the pocket of her coat, she began to read to herself with the most perfect unconcern of all that was going on about her. Meanwhile the operations of the cuisine were conducted with a despatch and dexterity that only French soldiers ever attain to; and, shall I confess it, the rich odour that steamed upwards from the well-seasoned potage — the savoury smell of the roast kid, albeit partaking of onions — and the brown breasts of certain "poulets," made me wish heartily that for half an hour or so I could have changed my allegiance, converted myself into a *soldat de la garde*, and led mademoiselle in to dinner. At length the party beneath had arranged their meal upon

the grass; and the corporal, with an air of no inconsiderable pretension, took mademoiselle's hand to conduct her to the place of honour at the head of the feast — calling out as he did, "Place, Messieurs, place pour madame la duchesse de — de —" "N'importe quoi," said another, "the emperor has many a battle to win yet and many a kingdom and a duchy to give away. As for myself, I count upon the *bâton* of a marshal before the campaign closes." "Have done I beg you with such folly, and help me to some of that *salmi*," said the lady, with a much more practical look about her than her expression a few moments before denoted. The feast now progressed with all the clatter which little ceremony, hearty appetites and good fellowship produce. The wine went round freely, and the *qui propos*, if I might judge from their mirth, were not wanting, for I could but catch here and there a stray word or so of the conversation. All this time my own position was far from agreeable. Independent of the fact of being a spectator of a good dinner and a jolly party while famishing with hunger and thirst, my chance of escape depended either on the party moving forward, or being so insensible from the effects of their carouse that I might steal away unobserved. While I balanced with myself which of these alternatives was more likely, an accident decided the question — my horse, who up to this moment was grazing close beside me, hearing one of the troop-horses neigh in the valley beneath, pricked up his ears, plunged upwards, broke the bridle with which I had fastened him, and cantered gaily down into the midst of the picquetted animals. In an instant every man sprung to his legs: some rushed to their holsters and drew forth their pistols;

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others caught up their sabres from the grass, and the young lady herself tightened her girth and sprang into her saddle with the alacrity of one accustomed to moments of danger. All was silence now for a couple of minutes, except the slight noise of the troopers engaged in bridling their horses and fixing on their packs, when a loud voice called out, "Voilà!" and the same instant every eye in the party was directed to my shako, which hung on a branch of a tree above me, and up to this moment I had forgotten. Before I could determine on any line of escape, three of the number had rushed up the rock, and with drawn sabres commanded me to surrender myself their prisoner. There was no choice: I flung down my sword with an air of sulky resignation, and complied. My despatches, of which they soon rifled me, sufficiently explained the cause of my journey, and allayed any apprehensions they might have felt as to a surprise party. A few brief questions were all they put to me; and then, conducting me down the cliff to the scene of their bivouack, they proceeded to examine my holsters and the flaps of my saddle, for any papers which I might have concealed in these places. "Eh bien! mon colonel," said the leader of the party, as he drew himself up before me, and carried his hand to his cap in a salute as respectful and orderly as though I were his officer, "what say you to a little supper ere we move forward?" "There's the bill of fare," said another, laughing as he pointed to the remnant of roast fowls and stewed kid that covered the grass. I was too young a soldier to comport myself at the moment with that philosophic resignation to circumstances which the changeful fortunes of war so forcibly instil; and I merely answered

by a brief refusal, while half unconsciously I threw my eyes around to see if no chance of escape presented itself. "No, no," cried the corporal, who at once read my look and its meaning; "don't try *that*, or you reduce me to the extremity of trying *this*," patting, as he spoke, the butt of his carbine, with an air of easy determination there was no mistaking.

"Let me rather recommend Monsieur le Capitaine to try this," said the Vivandière, who, unperceived by me, was all this while grilling the half of a poulet over the embers. There was something in the kindness of the act, coupled as it was with an air of graceful courtesy that touched me, so, smothering all my regretful thoughts at my mishap, I summoned up my best bow and my best French to acknowledge the civility, and the moment after was seated on the grass beside Mademoiselle Annette, discussing my supper with the appetite of a man whose sorrows were far inferior to his hunger.

As the moon rose, the party, who evidently had been waiting for some others they expected, made preparations for continuing their journey, the first of which consisted in changing the corporal's pack and equipments to the back of my English thoroughbred — his own meagre and rawboned quadruped being destined for me. Up to this instant the thought of escape had never left my mind — I knew I could calculate on the speed of my horse — I had had some trials of his endurance, and the only thing was, to obtain such a start as might carry me out of bullet range at once, and all was safe. Now this last hope deserted me, as I beheld the miserable hack to which I was condemned; and yet poignant as this feeling was, shall

I confess it? it was inferior in its pain to the sensation I experienced as I saw the rude French soldier with clumsy jack boots and heavy hand curvetting about upon my mettlesome charger, and exhibiting his paces for the amusement of his companions.

The order was now given to mount, and I took my place in the middle file, the dragoons on either side of me having unslung their carbines, and given me laughingly to understand that I was to be made a riddle of if I attempted an escape.

The long months of captivity that followed have, somehow, I cannot at all explain why, left no such deep impression on my mind as the simple events of that night—I remember it still like a thing of yesterday: we travelled along the crest of a mountain—the valley lying in deep, dark shadow beneath—the moon shone brightly out upon the gray granite rocks beside us—our pace was sometimes pushed to a fast trot, and then relaxed to a walk, the rather, as it appeared to me, to indulge the conversational tastes of my escort than for any other reason; their spirits never flagged for a moment—some jest or story was ever going forward—some anecdote of the campaign, or some love adventure, of which the narrator was the hero, commented on by all in turn, with a degree of sharp wit and ready repartee that greatly surprised me. In all these narratives mademoiselle played a prominent part, being invariably referred to for any explanation which the difficulties of female character seemed to require; her opinion on such points being always regarded as conclusive. At times too they would break forth into some rude hussar song—some regular specimen of camp lyric poetry—each verse being sung by a diffe-

rent individual, and chorussed by the whole party in common. I have said that these trifling details have left a deep impression behind them — stranger still, one of those wild strains haunts my memory yet, and strikingly illustrative as it is, not only of those songs in general, but of that peculiar mixture of levity and pathos, of reckless heartlessness and deep feeling so eminently French, I cannot help giving it to my reader. It represents the last love letter of a soldier to his mistress, and runs thus: —

LE DERNIER ADIEU DU SOLDAT.

1.

Rose, l'intention d' la présente,
Est de t' informer d' ma santé;
L'armée française est triomphante,
Et moi j'ai l'bras gauche emporté;
Nous avons eu d' grands avantages,
La mitraille m'a brisé les os,
Nous avons pris arm's et baggages;
Pour ma part j'ai deux bails dans l'dos.

2.

J'suis à l'hôpital d'où je pense
Partir bientôt pour chez les morts,
J't envoie dix francs qu'celui qui me panse,
M'a donnés pour avoir mon corps.
Je me suis dit puisqu'il faut que je file,
Et que ma Rose perd son épouseur,
Ça fait que je mourrai plus tranquille
D'savoir que j'lui laiss' ma valeur.

3.

Lorsque j'ai quitté ma viell' mère,
Elle s'expirant sensiblement,
A l'arrivé d'ma lettre j'espère
Qu'elle sera morte entièrement,
Car si la pauvre femme est guérite
Elle est si bonne qu' elle est dans le cas,
De s'faire mourir de mort subite
A la nouvelle de mon trépas.

4.

Je te recommand' bien ma p'tit Rose,
Mon bon chien ne l'abandonn' pas,
Surtout ne lui dit pas la chose
Qui fait qu'il ne me reverra pas,
Lui que je suis sûr se fait une fête
De me voir rev'nir caporal,
Il va pleurer comme une bête,
En apprenant mon sort fatal.

5.

Quoiqu' ça, c'est quelqu' chose qui m'enrage
D'être 'fait mourir loin du pays,
Au moins quand on meurt au village,
On peut dire bon soir aux amis,
On a sa place derrière l'église
On a son nom sur un' croix de bois,
Et puis on espèr' qu' la payse
Viendra pour prier quelque fois.

6.

Adieu, Rose! adieu! du courage,
A nous r'voir il n'faut plus songer,
Car au régiment où je m'engage,
On ne vous accorde pas de congé.
V'là tout qui tourne, j'n'y vois goutte,
Ah! — c'est fini — j'sens que j'm'en vas,
J'viens de recevoir ma feuil' de route,
Adieu! Rose, adieu! n' m'oubli' pas.

Fatigue and weariness that seemed never to weigh upon my companions, more than once pressed heavily on me: as I awoke from a short and fitful slumber, the same song continued; for having begun it, somehow, it appeared to possess such a charm for them, they could not cease singing, and the

Adieu! Rose, adieu! n' m'oubli' pas,
kept ringing through my ears till day-break.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The march.

SUCH, with little variety, was the history of each day and night of our march. The days usually passed in some place of security and concealment, while a reconnaissance would be made by some three or four of the party; and, as night fell, the route was continued.

One incident alone broke the monotony of the journey. On the fourth night we left the mountain, and descended into a large open plain, taking for our guide the course of a river which seemed familiar to my companions. The night was dark, heavy masses of cloud concealed the moon, and not a star was visible; the atmosphere was close and oppressive, and there reigned around a kind of unnatural stillness, unbroken by the flow of the sluggish river which moved on beside us. Our pace had been a rapid one for some time; and, contrary to their wont, the dragoons neither indulged in their gay songs nor merry stories, but kept together with more of military precision than they had hitherto assumed.

I conjectured from this that we were probably approaching the French lines; and, on questioning the corporal, was told that such was the case.

A little after midnight we halted for a few moments to refresh the horses. Each man dismounted, and stood with his hand upon the bridle; and I could not but mark how the awful silence of the hour seemed to prey upon their spirits as they spoke together in low and broken whispers, as if fearful to interrupt the deep

sleep of nature. It was just then that every eye was directed to a bright star that burst out above the horizon, and seemed to expand gradually into a large mass of great brilliancy, and again to diminish to a mere speck, which it remained for some time, and then disappeared entirely. We remained gazing on the dark spot where this phenomenon had appeared, endeavouring by a hundred conjectures to explain it. Wearied at length with watching, we were about to continue our journey, when, suddenly from the quarter from where the star had shone, a rocket shot up into the dark sky, and broke into ten thousand brilliant fragments, which seemed to hang suspended on high in the weight of the dense atmosphere. Another followed, and another; then, after a pause of some minutes, a blue rocket was seen to mount into the air, and explode with a report which, even at the distance we stood, was audible. Scarcely had its last fragments disappeared in the darkness, when a low rumbling noise, like the booming of distant thunder, seemed to creep along the ground. Then came a rattling volley, as if of small arms; and at last the whole horizon burst into a red glare, which forked up from earth to sky, with a crash that seemed to shake the very ground beneath us. Masses of dark, misshapen rock sprung into the blazing sky; millions upon millions of sparks glittered through the air, and a cry, like the last expiring wail of a drowning crew, rose above all other sounds — and all was still. The flame was gone — the gloomy darkness had returned — not a sound was heard — but in that brief moment, four hundred of the French army met their graves beneath the castle of Burgos, which in their hurried retreat they had blown up, without apprizing the

troops, who were actually marching beneath its very walls.

Our route was now resumed in silence — even the levity of the French soldiers had received a check; and scarcely a word passed as we rode on through the gloomy darkness, anxiously looking for day-break, to learn something of the country about us.

Towards sun-rise, we found ourselves at the entrance of a mountain pass traversed by the Ebro, which in some places almost filled the valley, and left merely a narrow path between its waters and the dark cliffs that frowned above. Here we proceeded; sometimes in single file — now tracing the signs of the retreating force which had just preceded us — now lost in astonishment at the prodigious strength of the position thus abandoned. But even these feelings gave way before a stronger one — our admiration of the exquisite beauty of the scenery. Glen after glen was seen opening as we advanced into this wide valley, each bearing its tributary stream to the mighty Ebro; the clear waters reflecting the broken crags, the waving foliage, and the bright verdure that beamed around, as orange trees, laurels, and olives bent over the current, or shot up in taper spires towards the clear blue sky. How many a sheltered nook we passed, with an involuntary longing to rest and linger among scenes so full of romantic beauty. But already the din of the retreating column was borne towards us on the breeze; the heavy, monotonous roll of large guns and caissons — while now and then we thought we could catch the swell of martial music blending through the other sounds. But soon we came up with waggons carrying the wounded and sick, who, having joined by another road, had fallen

to the rere of the march. From them we learned that the King of Spain, Joseph himself, was with the advanced guard; that the destination of the forces was Vittoria, where a junction with the *corps d'armée* of the other generals being effected, it was decided on giving battle to the Anglo-Spanish army.

As we advanced, our progress became slower and more difficult, close columns of infantry blocked up the road, or dense masses of cavalry, with several hundred led horses and baggage mules, prevented all chance of getting forward. Gradually however, the valley widened, the mountain became less steep, and by evening we reached a large plain, closed towards the north-east by lofty mountains, which I learned were the Pyrenees, and beheld, in the far distance, the tall spires of the city of Vittoria. Several roads crossed the plain towards the city, all of which were now crowded with troops — some pressing on in the direction of the town; others were taking up their position, and throwing up hasty embankments and stockades. Meanwhile the loaded waggons, with the spoil of the rich convents, and the royal treasure, were seen wending their slow way beneath the walls of Vittoria, on the road to Bayonne, escorted by a strong cavalry force, whose bright helmets and breastplates pronounced them “Cuirassiers de la Garde.” The animation and excitement of the whole scene was truly intense, and as I rode along beside the corporal, I listened with eagerness to his account of the various regiments as they passed hither and thither and took up their position on the wide plain. “There, look yonder,” said he, “where that dark mass is defiling beside the pine wood — see how they break into parties — watch them how they scatter along the low bank

beside the stream under shelter of the brush-wood: there were eight hundred men in that battalion — where are they now? all concealed — they are the tirailleurs of the army: and see on that low mound above them where the flag is flying, the guns are about to occupy that height. I was right, you see, there they come, six, seven, eight pieces of heavy metal: *sacre bleu*, that must be a place of some consequence.”

“What are the troops yonder with the red tufts in their caps, and scarlet trowsers?”

“*Ah! parbleu!* your countrymen will soon know to their cost — they are the ‘*Infanterie de la Garde:*’ there’s not a man in the column you are looking at, who is not *décoré*.”

“Look at this side, Monsieur — see the *Chasseurs a Cheval*,” said Annette, putting her hand on my arm, while her bright eyes glanced proudly at the glittering column which advanced by a road near us — coming along at a sharp trot — their equipment clattering — their horses highly conditioned — and the splendid uniform of light blue and silver giving them a most martial air.

“Bah!” said the corporal contemptuously, “these are the dragoons to my taste;” so saying, he pointed to a dark column of heavy cavalry who led their horses slowly along by a narrow causeway; the long black horse hair trailed from their dark helmets with something of a gloomy aspect, to which their flowing cloaks of deep blue added. “*Les Cuirassiers de Milhards;* — but look — look yonder — *tonnerre de ciel* — see that.” The object to which my attention was now directed was a park of artillery that covered the whole line of

road from the Miranda pass to the very walls of Vittoria.

"Two hundred, at least," exclaimed he, after counting some twenty or thirty of the foremost. "*Ventre bleu!* what chance have you before the batteries of the guard?" As he spoke, the drums beat across the wide plain; a continuous dull roll murmured along the ground — it ceased — the trumpets brayed forth a call — a clanging crash followed, and I saw that the musquets were brought to the shoulder, as the bayonets glanced in the sun, and the sharp sabres glittered along the squadrons. For a second or two all was still, and then the whole air was rent with a loud cry of *Vive le Roi!* — while a mounted party rode slowly from the left, and, entering one of the gates of the city, disappeared from our sight. Night was now beginning to fall, as we wended our way slowly along towards the walls of Vittoria; it being the corporal's intention to deliver his prisoner into the hands of the "état major" of Marshal Jourdan.

CHAPTER XXV.

Vittoria.

WHAT a contrast to the scene without the walls did the city of Vittoria present. Scarcely had we left behind us the measured tread of moving battalions, the dark columns of winding cavalry, when we entered streets brilliantly lighted; gorgeous and showy equipages turned every where, music resounded on all sides — servants in splendid liveries made way for ladies in all the elegance of evening dress, enjoying the delicious coolness of a southern climate at sunset — groups of officers in full uniform, chatted with their fair friends from the

balconies of the large majestic houses. The sounds of gaiety and mirth were heard from every open lattice, and the chink of the castanet, and the proud step of the fandango, echoed around us.

Women, dressed in all the perfection of Parisian coquetry, loitered along the streets, wondering at the strange sights the Spanish city afforded: themselves scarcely less objects of wonder to the dark-eyed señoras, who, with close-drawn mantillas, peered cautiously around them to see the strangers. Young French officers swaggered boastfully about, with the air of conquerors, while now and then some tall and swarthy Spaniard might be seen louring with gloomy frown from under the broad shadow of his sombrero, as if doubting the evidence of his own senses, at seeing his native city in the occupation of the usurper.

In the open plazas, too, the soldiers were picquetted, and stood in parties around their fires, or lay stretched on the rich tapestries they had carried away as spoils from the southern provinces; cups and goblets of the rarest handi-work, and of the most costly materials were strewn about them:—The vessels of the churches—the rich cloths of gold embroidery that had decorated the altars—pictures, the chef-d'œuvres of the first masters—all were there, in one confused heap, among baskets of fruit, wine-skins, ancient armour, and modern weapons.—From time to time some brilliant staff would pass, usually accompanied by ladies, who seemed strangely mixed up with all the military display of the scene.

My guide, after conversing for a few moments with a *sous-officier* of his regiment, turned from the plaza into a narrow street, the termination to which was

formed by a large building, now brilliantly lit up. As we approached, I perceived that two sentries were on guard at the narrow gate, and a large banner, with the imperial "N" in the centre, waved heavily over the entrance. "This is 'le quartier général,'" said the corporal, dropping his voice respectfully, as we drew near. At the same instant, a young officer, whose long plume bespoke him as an aid-de-camp, pushed past us: but turning hastily round, said something I could not catch, to the corporal. "Bien, mon lieutenant," said the latter, carrying his hand to his shako. "Follow me, Monsieur," said the officer, addressing me, and the next moment I found myself in a large and richly furnished room, when having motioned me to be seated, he left me.

My meditations, such as they were, were not suffered to be long, for in a few seconds the aid-de-camp made his appearance, and with a low bow requested me to accompany him.

"The general will receive you at once," said he.

I eagerly asked his name.

"Le Général Oudinot."

"Ah! the Marshal."

"No; his brother. I perceive you are a young soldier, so let me give you a hint: don't mind his manner — 'c'est un brave homme' at bottom, but —" the loud burst of laughter from a room at the end of the corridor drowned the conclusion of his speech, and before I had time for another question, the door opened, and I was introduced.

In a small but richly furnished chamber sat four officers round a table covered with a magnificent display of silver cups and plate, and upon which a desert was

spread — flasks of French and Spanish wine — a salver holding cigars — and a book, apparently an orderly book, before them, from which one of the party was reading as I came in. As the aid-de-camp announced me, they all looked up, and the general, for I knew him at once, fixing his eyes steadily on me, desired me to approach.

As I obeyed his not very courteous order, I had time to perceive that the figure before me was that of a stout square-built man of about fifty-five or sixty. His head was bald; his eyebrows, of a bushy gray, were large and meeting. A moustache of the same grizzly appearance shaded his lip, and served to conceal two projecting teeth, which, when he spoke, displayed themselves like boar's tusks, giving a peculiarly savage expression to his dark and swarthy countenance. The loose sleeve of his coat denoted that he had lost his left arm high up; but whenever excited, I could see that the short stump of the amputated limb jerked convulsively in a manner it was painful to look at.

"What! A deserter! a spy! Eh! what is it, Alphonse?"

The aid-de-camp, blushing, whispered some few words rapidly, and the general resumed —

"Ha! Be seated, Monsieur. The officers of the imperial army know how to treat their prisoners; though, *par Dieu!* they can't teach their enemies the lesson. You have floating prisons, they tell me, in England, where my poor countrymen die of disease and starvation. *Sacre Dieu!* what cruelty!"

"You have been misinformed, general. The nation I belong to is uniformly humane to all whom chance

of war has made its prisoners, and never forgets that the officers of an army are gentlemen."

"Ha! what do you mean?" said he, becoming dark with passion, as he half rose from his seat; then, stopping suddenly short, he continued in a voice of suppressed anger: — "Where are your troops? What number of men has your 'Villainton' got with him?"

"Of course," said I, smiling, "you do not expect me to answer such questions."

"Do you refuse it?" said he, with a grim smile.

"I do distinctly refuse," was my answer.

"What rank do you hold in your service?"

"I am but a subaltern."

"*Tenez*," said another of the party, who for some time past had been leisurely conning over the despatches which had been taken from me — "You are called 'capitaine' here, Monsieur."

"Ha! ha! What say you to that?" cried the general, exultingly. "Read it, Chamont."

"The despatches which Captain Airey will deliver —" "Is it not so?" said he, handing me the paper.

"Yes," said I, coolly; "he is the senior aid-de-camp, but being employed in General Graham's staff, now occupied in the pursuit of your army —"

"*Mille tonneres!* Young man, you have chosen an unsuitable place to cut your jokes."

"*Sa majesté le roi*," said an aid-de-camp, entering hastily, and throwing the door open to its full extent; and scarcely had the party time to rise when the emperor's brother appeared. Of the middle size, pale, and with a thoughtful, expressive countenance, Joseph Buonaparte's appearance was much in his favour. His forehead was lofty and expansive, his eye large and

full, and the sweet smile which seemed the gift of every member of the family, he possessed in perfection. After a few words with General Oudinot — whose rough manner and coarse bearing suffered no change by his presence — he turned towards me and with much mildness of voice and courtesy of demeanour, inquired if I were wounded. On hearing that I was not, he expressed a hope that my captivity would be of brief duration, as exchanges were already in progress — “Meanwhile,” said he, “you shall have as little to complain of as possible.”

As he concluded these few, but, to me, most comforting words, I received a hint from the aid-de-camp to withdraw, which I did, into an adjoining room. The same aid-de-camp by whom I had hitherto been accompanied now joined me, and, slapping me familiarly on the shoulder, cried out, “*Eh bien!* I hope now you are satisfied — Joseph is a fine, generous fellow, and will take care not to forget his promise to you. Meanwhile, come and take share of my supper.” He opened a door in the wainscot as he spoke, and introduced me into a perfectly fitted up little *boudoir*, where a supper had been laid out for him. Another cover was soon provided for me, and in a few minutes we were seated at table, chatting away about the war and the opposing armies, as though instead of partizans we had merely been lookers-on at the great game before us. My companion, though but a year or two older than myself, held the grade of colonel, every step to which he won at the point of his sword: he was strikingly handsome, and his figure, though slight, powerfully knit. As the champagne passed back and forward between us, confidences became interchanged and before midnight sound-

ed, I found my companion quite familiar with the name of Louisa Bellew, while to my equal astonishment, I was on terms of perfect intimacy with a certain lovely marquise of the Chaussée d'Antin. The tinkle of a sharp bell suddenly called the aid-de-camp to his legs; so drinking off a large goblet of cold water, and taking up his chapeau, he left the room.

I now threw myself back into my chair, and, tossing off a bumper of champagne, began to reason myself into the belief, that there were worse things even than imprisonment among the French; flitting thoughts of the past, vague dreams of the future, confused images of the present, were all dancing through my brain, when the door again opened, and I heard my companion's footsteps behind me.

"Do you know, Alphonse," said I, without turning in my chair, "I have been seriously thinking of making my escape: it is quite clear that a battle is not far off; and by Jove, if I only have the good fortune to meet with your *chef d'état major*, that savage old Oudinot, I'll pledge myself to clear off scores with him."

A half chuckle of laughter behind, induced me to continue —

"That old fellow certainly must have risen from the ranks, — not a touch of breeding about him. I'm certain his majesty rated him soundly for his treatment of me, when I came away. I saw his old mustachios bristling up — he knew he was in for it." A louder laugh than the first, but in somewhat of a different cadence, induced me to turn my head, when what was my horror to see before me, not my new friend, the aid-de-camp, but General Oudinot himself, who all this time had been listening to my polite intentions regarding his future

welfare! There was a savage exultation in his look, as his eye met mine, and for a second or two he seemed to enjoy my confusion too much to permit him to break silence. At last, he said —

“Are you on parole, Sir?”

“No,” I briefly replied, “nor shall I be.”

“What — have I heard you aright — do you refuse your parole?”

“Yes — I shall not pledge myself against attempting my escape the very first opportunity that offers.”

“Indeed,” said he slowly, “indeed. What is to become of poor General Oudinot if such a casualty take place. But come, Sir — I have his majesty’s orders to accept your parole; if you refuse it, you are then at *my* disposal. I have received no other instructions about you. Yes or no — I ask you for the last time.”

“No — distinctly no.”

“*C’est bien; holla, garde — numéro dix, et onze.*”

Two soldiers of the grenadiers, with fixed bayonets, appeared at the door — a few hurried words were spoken, the only part of which I could catch was the word “*cachot.*” I was at once ordered to rise — a soldier walked on either side of me, and I was in this way conducted through the city to the prison of the gendarmerie, where for the night I was to remain, with orders to forward me the next morning at day-break, with some Spanish prisoners, on the road to Bayonne.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

The retreat.

MY cell, for such it was, although dignified with the appellation of chamber, looked out by a small window upon a narrow street, the opposite side to which was formed by the wall of a churchyard pertaining to a convent. As day broke I eagerly took my place at the casement to watch what was going on without; but except some bare-headed figure of a monk gliding along between the dark yew avenues, or some female in deep mourning passing to her morning's devotions beside the grave of a relative, I could see nothing; a deep silence seemed to brood over the city, so lately the scene of festivity and mirth. Towards four o'clock, however, I could hear the distant roll of drums, which gradually extended from the extreme right to the left of the plain before the town; then I heard the heavy monotonous tramp of marching, broken occasionally by the clank of the brass bands of the cavalry, or the deep sullen thunder of the artillery waggons, as they moved along over the paved roads; the sounds came gradually nearer; the trumpets too joined the clamour with the shrill *reveillé*, and soon the street towards the front of the prison re-echoed with the unceasing clatter of troops moving forward. I could hear the voices of the officers calling to the men to move up; heard more than once the names of particular regiments, as some distinguished corps were passing; the music of the bands was quick and inspiring, and as some popular air was struck up, the men would break forth suddenly into the words, and the rough-voiced chorus rang through the narrow streets, and fell heavily on my own heart, as I lay there

a prisoner. Hour after hour did this continue; but yet the silence behind remained as unbroken as ever; the lonely churchyard, with its dark walks and sad-looking trees, was still and deserted.

By degrees the din in front diminished; regiments passed now only at intervals, and their pace increased to a run, left no time for the bands; the cavalry, too, trotted rapidly by, and at last all was still as in the gloomy street before me. It was now eight o'clock, and no summons had yet come to me, although I had heard myself the order for our marching on the Bayonne-road by sunrise; the prison was still as the grave, not a step could I hear — not a bolt nor a hinge creaked; I looked to the window, but the strong iron grating that defended it, left no prospect of escape; the door was even stronger, and there was no chimney.

Sometimes the thought occurred to me that the party had forgotten me, and had gone away with the other prisoners; this thought somehow had its consolation; but the notion of being left to starve came suddenly across me, and I hastened to the window to try and make myself known to some chance passer by; just then the loud boom of a gun struck upon my ear; another followed, louder still; and then a long heavy crashing noise, which rose and fell as the wind bore it, told me that the work of death had begun. The sound of the large guns, which at first came only at intervals, now swelled into one loud continuous roar that drowned all other noise; the strong frames of the windows shook, and the very ground beneath my feet seemed to tremble with the dreadful concussion of the artillery; sometimes the din would die away for a few seconds, and then, as the wind freshened, it would

swell into a thunder, so loud as to make me almost think the battle was close to where I stood. Hour after hour did this continue; and now, although the little street beside me was thronged with many an anxious group, I no longer thought of questioning them; my whole soul was wrapped up in the one thought, that of the dreadful engagement; and as I listened, my mind was carrying on with itself some fancied picture of the fight, with no other guide to my imaginings than the distant clangour of the battle; now I thought that the French were advancing; that their battery of guns had opened; and I could imagine the dark mass that moved on, their tall shakos and black belts peering amidst the smoke that lay densely in the field. On they poured thousand after thousand; ay, there goes the fusillade: the platoons are firing; but now they halt! the crash of fixing bayonets is heard; a cheer breaks forth; the cloud is rent; the thick smoke is severed as if by a lightning flash; the red coats have dashed through at the charge; the enemy waits not; the line wavers and breaks; down come the cavalry, like an eagle on the swoop; but again, the dread artillery opens; the French form beneath the lines, and the fight is renewed.

The fever of my mind was at its height; I paced my room with hurried steps, and, springing to the narrow casement, held my ear to the wall to listen. Forgetting where I was, I called out as though at the head of my company, with the wild yell of the battle around me, and the foe before me; suddenly the crowd beneath the window broke; the crash of cavalry equipments resounded through the street, and the head of a squadron of cuirassiers came up at a trot, followed by a train of baggage waggons, with six horses to each;

the drivers whipped and spurred their cattle, and all betokened haste. From the strength of the guard, and the appearance of the waggons, I conjectured that they were the treasures of the army; an opinion in which I was strengthened by the word "Bayonne" chalked in large letters on a chest thrown on the top of a carriage.

Some open waggons followed, in which the invalids of the army lay, a pale and sickly mass, their lacklustre eyes gazed heavily around with a stupid wonder, like men musing in a dream — even they, however, had arms given them, such was the dread of falling into the hands of the guerilla bands, who infested the mountain passes, and never gave quarter, even to the wounded and the dying. The long file at length passed, but only to make way for a still longer procession of Spanish prisoners, who, bound wrist to wrist, marched between two files of mounted gendarmes, the greater number of these were mountaineers, guerillas of the south, condemned to the galleys for life, their bronzed faces and stalwart figures a striking contrast to their pale and emaciated companions, the inhabitants of the towns, who could scarce drag their weary limbs along, and seemed at every step ready to sink between misery and privation. The ribald jests and coarse language of the soldiers were always addressed to these, there seeming to be a kind of respect for the bolder guerillas, even in the hour of their captivity. The tramp of led horses, the roll of waggons, the cracking of whips, mingled with the oaths of the muleteers, and the fainter cries of the sick, now filled the air, and only occasionally did the loud cannonade rise above them: from every window faces appeared turned with excited eagerness towards the dense crowds; and though I could perceive

that inquiries as to the fate of the day were constantly made and answered, my ignorance of Spanish prevented my understanding what was said.

The noise in front of the prison, where the thoroughfare was wider and larger, far exceeded that around me; and at last I could hear the steps of persons marching over-head, and ascending and descending the stairs. Doors clapped and slammed on every side; when, suddenly, the door of my own cell was shaken violently, and a voice cried out in French — “Try this; I passed twice without perceiving it.” The next moment the lock turned, and my room was filled with dragoons, their uniforms splashed and dirty, and evidently bearing the marks of a long and severe march.

“Are you the Guerilla Guiposcoa de Condeiga,” said one of the party, accosting me, as I stood wrapped up in my cloak.

“No; I am an English officer.”

“Show your epaulettes, then,” said another, who knew that Spanish officers never wore such.

I opened my cloak. When the sight of my red uniform at once satisfied them. At this instant a clamour of voices without was heard, and several persons called out, “We have him; here he is.” The crowd around me rushed forth at the sound; and, following among them, I reached the street, now jammed up with horse and foot, waggons, tumbrils, and caissons—some endeavouring to hasten forward towards the road to Bayonne; others as eagerly turned towards the plain of Vittoria, where the deafening roll of artillery showed the fight was at its fiercest. The dragoons issued forth, dragging a man amongst them, whose enormous stature and broad chest towered above the

others, but who apparently made not the slightest resistance as they hurried him forward, shouting, as they went, "*A la grande place! — à la place!*"

It was the celebrated Guerilla Guiposcoa, who had distinguished himself by acts of heroic daring, and sometimes savage cruelty, towards the French — and who had fallen into their hands that morning. Anxious to catch a glance at one of whom I had heard so often — I pressed forward among the rest, and soon found myself in the motley crowd of soldiers and townspeople that hurried towards the Plaza.

Scarcely had I entered the square when the movement of the multitude was arrested, and a low whispering murmur succeeded to the deafening shouts of vengeance and loud cries of death I had heard before; then came the deep roll of a muffled drum; I made a strong effort to press forward, and at length reached the rear of a line of dismounted dragoons, who stood leaning on their carbines — their eyes steadily bent on a figure some twenty paces in front. He was leisurely employed in divesting himself of some of his clothes; which, as he took off, he piled in a little heap beside him; his broad guerilla hat, his dark cloak, his sheep's wool jacket slashed with gold, fell one by one from his hand; and his broad manly chest at last lay bare, heaving with manifest pride and emotion, as he turned his dark eyes calmly around him. Nothing was now heard in that vast crowd, save when some low broken sob of grief would burst from the close-drawn mantillas of the women, as they offered up their heartfelt prayers for the soul of the patriot.

A low parapet wall, surmounted by an iron railing, closed in this part of the Plaza, and separated it from

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A low parapet wall, surmounted by an iron railing, closed in this part of the Plaza, and separated it from

a deep and rapid river that flowed beneath — a branch of the Ebro.

Beyond, the wide plain of Vittoria stretched away towards the Pyrenees; and although two leagues distant the scene of the battle was discernible, from the heavy mass of cloud that lowered over head, and the deep booming of the guns, that seemed to make the air tremulous.

The Spaniard turned his calm look towards the battle-field, and for an instant his dark eye flashed back upon his foes with an expression of triumphant daring, which seemed as it were to say — I am avenged already! A cry of impatience burst from the crowd of soldiers, and the crash of their firelocks threatened that they would not wait longer for his blood. But the guerilla's manner changed at once; and holding up a small ebony crucifix before him, he seemed to ask a moment's respite for a short prayer.

The stillness showed his request was complied with: he turned his back towards the crowd, and placing the crucifix on the low parapet, he bent down on both his knees, and seemed lost in his devotions. As he rose I thought I could perceive that he threw a glance, rapid as lightning, over the wall towards the river that flowed beneath. He now turned fully round; and unfastening the girdle of many a gay colour that he wore round his waist, he threw it carelessly on his left arm; and then, baring his breast to the full, knelt slowly down, and with his arms wide apart called out in Spanish, "here is my life — come take it." The words were scarcely uttered, when the carbines clanked as they brought them to the shoulder; the sergeant of the company called out the words, "*donnez*" — a

pause — “*feu!*” The fusillade rung out, and, as my eyes pierced the smoke, I could see that the guerilla had fallen to the earth, his arms crossed upon his bosom.

A shriek wild and terrific burst from the crowd. — The blue smoke slowly rose, and I perceived the French sergeant standing over the body of the guerilla, which lay covered with blood upon the turf. A kind of convulsive spasm seemed to twitch the limbs, upon which the Frenchman drew his sabre — the rattle of the steel scabbard rang through my heart; the bright weapon glanced as he raised it above his head, at the same instant, the guerilla chief sprang to his legs, he tottered as he did so, for I could see that his left arm hung powerless at his side: but his right held a long poignard. — He threw himself upon the Frenchman’s bosom — a yell followed, and the same moment, the guerilla sprang over the battlements, and with a loud splash, dropped into the river beneath. The water had scarce covered his body, as the Frenchman fell a corpse upon the ground.

A perfect roar of madness and rage burst from the French soldiers as rushing to the parapet, a hundred balls swept the surface of the river; but the tall reeds of the bank had already concealed the bold guerilla, whose left arm had received the fire of the soldiers, who now saw the meaning of that quick movement by which he had thrown his girdle around it. The incident was but the work of a few brief moments; nor was there longer time to think on it: for suddenly a squadron of cavalry swept past, at the full speed of their horses, calling out the words “place there —

make way there in front. The ambulance — the ambulance!”

A low groan of horror rose around; the quick retreat of the wounded betokened that the battle was going against the French; the words “beaten and retreat” re-echoed through the crowd; and as the dark suspicion crept amid the moving mass, the first waggon of the wounded slowly turned the angle of the square, a white flag hung above it. I caught but one glance of the sad convoy: but never shall I forget that spectacle of blood and agony. Torn and mangled they lay, an indiscriminate heap; their faces blackened with powder, their bodies shattered with wounds. High above the other sounds their piercing cries rent the air — with mingled blasphemies and insane ravings. Meanwhile, the drivers seemed only anxious to get forward; as deaf to every prayer and entreaty, they whipped their horses, and called out to the crowd to make way.

Escape was now open; but where could I go? My uniform exposed me to immediate detection; should I endeavour to conceal myself, discovery would be my death. The vast tide of people that poured along the streets was a current too strong to stem, and I hesitated what course to follow. My doubts were soon resolved for me: an officer of General Oudinot's staff, who had seen me the previous night, rode up close to where I stood, and then turning to his orderly, spoke a few hurried words. The moment after, two heavy dragoons, in green uniform and brass helmets, came up, one at either side of me; without a second's delay one of them unfastened a coil of small rope that hung at his saddle-bow, which with the assistance of the

other was passed over my right wrist and drawn tight. In this way, secured like a malefactor, I was ordered forward. In vain I remonstrated — in vain I told them I was a British officer; to no purpose did I reiterate that hitherto I had made no effort to escape. It is not in the hour of defeat Frenchmen can behave either with humanity or justice. A volley of '*sacres*' was the only answer I received, and nothing was left me but to yield.

Meanwhile the tumult and confusion of the town was increasing every minute. Heavy waggons — inscribed in large letters, "*Domaine extérieure de sa Majesté l'Empereur*" — containing the jewels and treasures of Madrid, passed by, drawn by eight, sometimes ten horses, and accompanied by strong cavalry detachments. Infantry regiments, blackened with smoke and gunpowder, newly arrived from the field, hurried past to take up positions on the Bayonne road to protect the retreat; then came the nearer din and crash of the artillery as the French army were falling back upon the town.

Scarcely had we issued from the walls of the city, when the whole scene of flight and ruin was presented to our eyes. The country for miles round was one moving mass of fugitives — cannon, waggons, tumbrils, wounded soldiers, horsemen, and even splendid equipages, were all mixed up together on the Pampeluna road which lay to our right. The march was there intercepted by an overturned waggon — the horses were plunging, and the cries of wounded men could be heard even where we were. The fields at each side of the way were soon spread over by the crowd, eager to press on. Guns were now abandoned and thrown

into ditches and ravines; the men broke their muskets, and threw the fragments on the road-side, and vast magazines of powder were exploded here and there through the plain.

But my attention was soon drawn to objects more immediately beside me. The Bayonne road, which we now reached, was the last hope of the retiring army. To maintain this line of retreat, strong detachments of infantry, supported by heavy guns, were stationed at every eminence commanding the position; but the swooping torrent of the retreat had left little time for these to form — many of whom were borne along with the flying army. Discipline gave way on every side — the men sprang upon the waggons, refusing to march — the treasures were broken open and thrown upon the road. Frequently the baggage-guard interchanged shots and sabre-cuts with the infuriated soldiers, who only thought of escape; and the ladies, who but yesterday were the objects of every care and solicitude, were hurried along amid that rude multitude, some on foot, others glad to be allowed to take a place in the ambulance among the wounded — their dresses blood-stained and torn, adding to the horror and misery of the scene. Such was the prospect before us. Behind a dark mass hovered as if even yet withstanding the attack of the enemy, whose guns thundered clearer and clearer every moment. Still the long line of wounded came on — some in wide open carts, others stretched upon the gun-carriages, mangled and bleeding. Among these my attention was drawn to one whose head having fallen over the edge of the cart, was endangered by every roll of the heavy wheel that grazed his very skull. There was a halt, and I

seized the moment to assist the poor fellow as he lay thus in peril. His helmet had fallen back and was merely retained by the brass chain beneath his chin: his temples were actually cleft open by a sabre-cut, and I could see that he had also received some shot-wounds in the side, where he pressed his hands, the blood welling up between the fingers.

As I lifted the head to place it within the cart, the eyes opened and turned fully upon me. A faint smile of gratitude curled his lip; I bent over him, and, to my horror, recognised in the mangled and shattered form before me — the gallant fellow with whom the very night before I had formed almost a friendship. The word “cold,” muttered between his teeth, was the only answer I could catch, as I called him by his name. The order to march rang out from the head of the convoy, and I had barely time to unfasten my cloak, and throw it over him, ere the waggon moved on. I never saw him after.

A squadron of cavalry now galloped past, reckless of all before them; the traces of the artillery were cut, and the men, mounting the horses, deserted the guns, and rode for their lives. In the midst of the flying mass, a splendid equipage flew past, its six horses lashed to madness by the postillions; a straggling guard of honour galloped at either side, and a grand ecuyer in scarlet, who rode in front, called out incessantly, “*Place — place; pour sa majesté*”; but all to no purpose: the road, blocked up by broken waggons, dense crowds of horse and foot, dead and dying, soon became impassable. An effort to pass a heavily-loaded waggon, entangled the coach: the axle was caught by the huge waggon — the horses plunged when they felt the restraint,

and the next moment the royal carriage was hurled over on its side, and fell with a crash into the ravine at the road-side. While the officers of his staff dismounted to rescue the fallen monarch, a ribald burst of laughter rose from the crowd, and a pioneer actually gave the butt of his carbine to assist the king as, covered with mud, he scrambled up the ditch.

I had but an instant to look upon his pale countenance, which even since the night before seemed to have grown many years older, ere I was myself dragged forward among the crowd.

Darkness now added its horror to the scene of riot and confusion; the incessant cries of the fugitives told that the English cavalry were upon them; the artillery came closer and closer, and the black sky was traversed by many a line of fire, as the shells poured down upon the routed army; the English guns, regardless of roads, dashed down on the terrified masses, raining balls and howitzer-shells on every side. Already the cheers of my gallant countrymen were within my hearing, and amid all the misery and danger around me, my heart rose proudly at the glorious victory they had gained.

Meanwhile my escort, whose feeling towards me became more brutal as their defeat was more perceptible, urged me forward with many an oath and imprecation. Leaving the main road, we took the fields, already crowded with the infantry. At last, as the charges of the English came closer, they seemed to hesitate upon being any longer burthened by me, and one, after interchanging some angry words with his companion, rode off, leaving me to the care of him who passed the cord round my wrist. For a second or two this fellow seemed to waver whether he might not dis-

pose of me more briefly, and once he half withdrew his pistol from the holster, and turned round in his saddle to regard me more steadily; a better feeling, however, gained the mastery; the hope, too, of promotion, could he bring in an officer his prisoner, had doubtless, its share in his decision. He ordered me to jump up behind him, and, dashing spurs into his troop horse, rode forward.

I have, perhaps, lingered too long in my recollections of this eventful night; it was, however, the last striking incident which preceded a long captivity. On the third day of the retreat I was joined to a band of Spanish prisoners marching towards Bayonne. Of the glorious victory which rescued the Peninsula from the dominion of the French, and drove their beaten armies beyond the Pyrenees, or of the great current of events which followed the battle of Vittoria, I do not purpose to speak. Neither will I trouble my reader with a narrative of hardship and suffering; it is enough to mention that my refusal to give my parole, subjected me in all cases to every indignity.

Wearied out at length, I accepted this only chance of rendering life endurable; and on reaching Bayonne, gave my word not to attempt my escape, and was accordingly separated from my companions in misfortune, and once more treated as a gentleman.

The refusal to accept "parole," I learned afterwards, was invariably construed by the French authorities of the day into a direct avowal not only to attempt escape by any means that might present themselves, but was also deemed a rejection of the hospitality of the country, which placed the recusant beyond the pale of its courtesy.

No sooner, then, had I complied with this necessity — for such it was — than I experienced the greatest kindness and politeness in every quarter. Through every village in the south, the house of the most respectable inhabitant was always open to me; and with a delicacy it would be difficult to match elsewhere, although the events of the Spanish war were the subjects of general interest wherever we passed, not a word was spoken nor a hint dropped before the “prisoner,” which could in the slightest degree offend his nationality, or hurt his susceptibility as an enemy.

* * * * *

I shall now beg of my reader to pass over with me a long interval of time, during which my life presented nothing of interest or incident, and accompany me to the environs of St. Omer, where, in the commencement of the year 1814, I found myself domesticated as a prisoner of war on parole. During the long period that had elapsed since the battle of Vittoria, I had but once heard from home: matters there were pretty much as I had left them. My father had removed to a colonial appointment, whence he transmitted the rich revenues of his office to my mother, whose habitual economy enabled her to dispense at Bath, much in the same kind of way, as she had formerly done at London. My lovely cousin — in the full possession of her beauty and a large fortune — had refused some half-dozen brilliant proposals, and was reported to have an unswerving attachment to some near relative, which happy individual, my mother suggested, was myself. Of the Belles, I learned from the newspapers that Sir Simon was dead; and Miss Bellew, having recovered most of the great estates of her family through the instrumentality of a

clever attorney — whom I guessed to be my friend Paul — was now the great *belle* and fortune of Dublin. I had frequently written home, and once or twice to the Rooneys and the Major, but never received any answer; so that at last I began to think myself forgotten by every one, and dreamed away my life in a state of almost apathy — dead to the exciting events of the campaign, which, even in the seclusion where I lived, were from time to time reported. The brilliant march of our victorious troops through the Pyrenees and the south of France, Nivelle, Orthes, and Toulouse, I read of as people read of long past events; life to me appeared to have run out; and my thoughts turned ever backward to the bright morning of my career in Ireland — my early burst of manhood — my first and only passion.

The old royalist seigneur upon whom I was billeted, could evidently make nothing of the stolid indifference with which I heard him and his antiquated spouse discuss the glorious prospect of a restoration of the Bourbons: even the hope of liberty was dying away within me. One ever-present thought had damped all ardour and all ambition — I had done nothing as a soldier — my career had ended as it begun — and, while others had risen to fame and honour, *my* name had won nothing of distinction and repute. Instead of anxiously looking forward to a meeting with Louisa Bellew, I dreaded the very thoughts of it. My mother's fashionable *morgue* and indifference I should now feel as a sarcasm on my own failure; and as to my cousin Julia, the idea alone of her raillery was insufferable. The only plan I could devise for the future was, as soon as I should recover my liberty, to exchange into some regiment in the East Indies, and never to return to England.

It was, then, with some surprise, and not much sympathy, that I beheld my venerable host appear one morning at breakfast with a large white cockade in the breast of his frock coat, and a huge white lily in a wine glass before him. His elated manner and joyous looks were all so many riddles to me; while the roll of drums in the peaceful little town, the ringing of bells, and the shouts of the inhabitants, were all too much even for apathy like mine.

"What is the *Tintamarre* about?" said I, pettishly, as I saw the old gentleman fidget from the table to the window and then back again, rubbing his hands, admiring his cockade, and smelling at the lily, alternately.

"*Tintamarre!*" said he, indignantly, "*savez vous, Monsieur? Ce ne'st pas le mot, celui là.* We are restored, Sir! we have regained our rightful throne! we are no longer exiles!"

"Yes!" said the old lady, bursting into the room, and throwing herself into her husband's arms, and then into mine, in a rapture of enthusiasm — "Yes, brave young man! to you and your victorious companions in arms we owe the happiness of this moment. We are restored."

"*Oui!* restored! restored!" echoed the old gentleman, throwing open the window, and shouting as though he would have burst a blood-vessel, while the mob without, catching up the cry, yelled it louder than ever.

These people must be all deranged, thought I, unable to conjecture at the moment the reasons for such extravagant joy. Meanwhile, the room became crowded with townspeople, in holiday costume, all wearing the white cockade, and exchanging with each other the warmest felicitations at the happy event.

I now soon learned that the allies were in the possession of Paris, that Napoleon had abdicated, and the immediate return of Louis XVIII. was already decided upon. The trumpets of a cavalry regiment on the march were soon added to the uproar without, accompanied by cries of "The English!" "The brave English!" I rushed to the door, and, to my astonishment beheld above the heads of the crowd the tall caps of a British dragoon regiment towering aloft. Their band struck up as they approached; and what a sensation did my heart experience as I heard the well-remembered air of "Garryowen" resound through the little streets of a French village.

"An Irish regiment!" said I, half aloud.

The word was caught by a by-stander, who immediately communicated it to the crowd, adding, by way of explanation, "*Les Irlandois; oui, ce sont les Cosaques d'Angleterre.*" I could not help laughing at the interpretation, when suddenly my own name was called out loudly by some person from the ranks. I started at the sound, and, forcing my way through the crowd, I looked eagerly on every side, my heart beating with anxiety lest some deception might have misled me.

"Hinton! Jack Hinton!" cried the voice again. At the head of the regiment rode three officers, whose looks were bent steadily on me, while they seemed to enjoy my surprise and confusion. The oldest of the party, who rode between the two others, was a large swarthy-looking man, with a long drooping moustache — at that time rarely worn by officers of our army. His left arm he wore in a sling; but his right was held in a certain easy, jaunty manner I could not soon forget.

A burst of laughter broke from him at length, as he called out,

"Come, Jack, you must remember me."

"What!" cried I; "O'Grady! — is it possible?"

"Even so, my boy," said he, as, throwing his reins on his wrist, he grasped my hand and shook it with all his heart. "I knew you were here, and I exerted all my interest to get quartered near you. This is my regiment — eh? — not fellows to be ashamed of, Jack? But come along with us; we mustn't part company now."

Amid the wildest cries of rejoicing, and frantic demonstrations of gratitude from the crowd, the regiment moved on to the little square of the village. Here the billets were speedily arranged; — the men betook themselves to their quarters — the officers broke into small parties — and O'Grady and myself retired to the inn, where, having dined *tête-à-tête*, we began the interchange of our various adventures since we parted.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The four-in-hand.

My old friend, save in the deeper brown upon his cheek, and some scars from French sabres, was nothing altered from the hour in which we parted: the same bold generous temperament, the same blending of recklessness and deep feeling, the wild spirit of adventure, and the gentle tenderness of a child — were all mixed up in his complex nature, for he was every inch an Irishman.

While the breast of his uniform glittered with many a cross and decoration, he scarcely ever alluded to his own feats in the campaign; nor did he more than pass-

ingly mention the actions where his own conduct had been most conspicuous. Indeed, there was a reserve in his whole manner, while speaking of the peninsular battles, which I soon discovered proceeded from delicacy towards me, knowing how little I had seen of service from my early imprisonment, and fearing lest, in the detail of the glorious career of our armies, he might be inflicting fresh wounds on one whose fortune forbade him to share in it.

He often asked me about my father, and seemed to feel deeply the kindness he had received from him when in London. Of my mother, too, he sometimes spoke, but never even alluded to Lady Julia; and when once I spoke of her as the protector of Corny, he fidgetted for a second or two, seemed uneasy and uncomfortable, and gave me the impression that he felt sorry to be reduced to accept a favour for his servant, where he himself had been treated with coldness and distance.

Apart from this — and it was a topic we mutually avoided — his spirits were as high as ever. Mixing much with the officers of his corps, he was actually beloved by them. He joined in all their schemes of pleasure and amusement, with the zest of his own buoyant nature; and the youngest cornet in the regiment felt himself the colonel's inferior in the gaiety of the mess, as much as at the head of the squadrons.

At the end of a few days, I received from Paris the papers necessary to relieve me from the restraint of my parole, and was concerting with O'Grady the steps necessary to be taken to resume my rank in the service, when an incident occurred which altered all our plans for the moment, and, by one of those strange

casualties which so often occur in life, gave a new current to my own fate for ever.

I should mention here, that amid all the rejoicings which ushered in the restoration — amid all the flattery by which the allied armies were received — one portion of the royalists maintained a dogged, ungenial spirit towards the men by whom their cause was rendered victorious, and never forgave them the honour of reviving a dynasty, to which they themselves had contributed nothing. These were the old *militaires* of Louis XVIII.: the men who, too proud or too good-for-nothing to accept service under the emperor, had lain dormant during the glorious career of the French armies, and who now, in their hour of defeat and adversity, started into life as the representatives of the military genius of the country; — these men, I say, hated the English with a vindictive animosity which the old Napoleonist could not equal. Without the generous rivalry of an open foe, they felt themselves humbled by comparison with the soldiers, whose weather-beaten faces and shattered limbs bore token of a hundred battles, and for the very cause, too, for which they themselves were the most interested. This ungenerous spirit found vent for itself in a thousand petty annoyances, which were practised upon our troops in every town and village of the north of France; and every officer whose billet consigned him to the house of a royalist soldier, would gladly have exchanged his quarters for the companionship of the most inveterate follower of Napoleon. To an instance of what I have mentioned was owing the incident which I am about to relate.

To relieve the *ennui* of a French village, the offi-

cers of the eighteenth had, with wonderful expenditure of skill and labour, succeeded in getting up a four-in-hand drag, which, to the astonishment and wonder of the natives, was seen daily wending its course through the devious alleys and narrow streets of the little town, the roof covered with dashing dragoons, whose laughing faces and loud-sounding bugles were all deemed so many direct insults by the ill-conditioned party I have mentioned.

The unequivocal evidences of dislike they exhibited to this dashing "turn out" formed, I believe, one of its great attractions to the eighteenth, who never omitted an occasion, whatever the state of the weather, to issue forth every day, with all the noise and uproar they could muster.

At last, however, the old *commissaire de police*, whose indignation at the proceeding knew no bounds, devised an admirable expedient for annoying our fellows — one which, supported as it was by the law of the country, there was no possibility of evading. This was, to demand the passport of every officer who passed the "*barrière*," thus necessitating him to get down from the roof of the coach, present his papers, and have them carefully conned and scrutinized, their *visée* looked into, and all sorts of questions propounded.

When it is understood that the only drive led through one or other of these barriers, it may be imagined how provoking and vexatious such a course of proceeding became. Representations were made to the mayor ever and anon, explaining that the passports once produced, no further inconvenience should be incurred — but all to no purpose. Any one who

knows France will acknowledge how totally inadequate a common-sense argument is in the decision of a question before a government functionary. The mayor too was a royalist, and the matter was decided against us.

Argument and reason having failed, the gallant eighteenth came to the resolution to try force, and accordingly it was decided that next morning we should charge the *barrière* in full gallop, as it was rightly conjectured that no French *employé* would feel disposed to encounter the rush of a four-in-hand, even with the law on his side.

To render the *coup-de-main* more brilliant, and perhaps, too, to give an air of plausibility to the infraction, four dashing thoroughbred light chestnuts — two of the number having never felt a collar in their lives — were harnessed for the occasion. A strong force of the wildest spirits of the regiment took their places on the roof; and amid a cheer that actually made the street ring, and a tantarara from the trumpets, the equipage dashed through the town, the leaders bounding with the swingle bars every moment over their backs. Away we went, the populace flying in terror on every side, and every eye turned towards the *barrière*, where the dignified official stood, in the calm repose of his station, as if daring us to transgress his frontier. Already had he stepped forward with his accustomed question. The words — “*Messieurs, je vous demande* —” had escaped his lips, when he had barely time to spring into his den, as the furious leaders tore past, the pavement crashing beneath their hoofs, and the shouts of laughter mingling with the uproar. Having driven for a league or so at a slow

pace, to breathe our cattle, we turned homewards, rejoicing in the success of our scheme, which had fully satisfied our expectations. What was our chagrin, however, as we neared the *barrière*, to discover that a strong force of mounted gendarmes stopped the way, their drawn sabres giving us plainly to understand the fate that awaited our horses if we persisted in our plan! What was to be done? To force a passage under the circumstances was only to give an opportunity to the gendarmerie, they were long anxious for to cut our whole equipage in pieces. To yield was the only alternative; but what an alternative! — to be laughed at by the whole town on the very day of our victory!

“I have it!” said O’Grady, whose left arm being wounded, sat on the box beside the driver; “I have it, lads. Pull up when they tell you, and do as they direct.”

With some difficulty, the four dashing nags were reined in, as we came up to the *barrière*; and the commissaire, bursting with passion, appeared at the door of the lodge, and directed us to get down.

“Your passports will avail little on the present occasion,” said he insolently, as we produced our papers. “Your carriage and horses are confiscated. St. Omer has now privilege as a fortified town. The fortresses of France, enforce a penalty of forty thousand francs —” A burst of laughter from the by-standers at our rueful faces prevented us hearing the remainder of the explanation. Meanwhile, to our horror and disgust, some half dozen gendarmes, with their long caps and heavy boots, were crawling up the sides of the drag, and taking their seats upon the top. Some crept into

the interior, and showed their grinning faces at the windows; others mounted into the rumble; and two more aspiring spirits ascended to the box, by one of whom O'Grady was rudely ordered to get down, a summons enforced by the commissaire himself in a tone of considerable insolence. O'Grady's face for a minute or two seemed working with a secret impulse of fun and devilment, which I could not account for at such a moment, as he asked, in a voice of much humility —

“Does monsieur the commissaire require me to come down?”

“Instantly!” roared the Frenchman, whose passion was now boiling over.

“In that case, gentlemen, take charge of the team.” So saying, he handed the reins to the passive gendarmes, who took them, without well knowing why. “I have only a piece of advice,” continued Phil, as he slowly descended the side — “keep a steady hand on the near-side leader, and don't let the bar strike her; and now, good-bye.” He flourished his four-in-hand whip as he spoke, and with one tremendous cut came down on the team, from leader to wheeler, accompanying the stroke with a yell there was no mistaking. The heavy carriage bounded from the earth, as the infuriated cattle broke away at full gallop; a narrow street and a sharp angle lay straight in front; but few of those on the drag waited for the turn: as at every step some bear-skin shako shot into the air, followed by a tall figure, whose heavy boots seemed ill adapted for flying in.

The corporal himself had abandoned the reins, and held on manfully by the rail of the box. On every side they fell, in every attitude of distress. But already

the leaders reached the corner, round went the swingle bars, the wheelers followed, the coach rocked to one side, sprang clean off the pavement came down with a crash, and then fell right over, while the maddened horses, breaking away, dashed through the town, the harness in fragments behind them, and the pavement flying at every step.

The immediate consequences of this affair were some severe bruises, and no small discouragement to the gendarmierie of St. Omer: the remoter ones, an appeal from the municipal authorities to the commander-in-chief, by whom the matter was referred for examination to the adjutant-general. O'Grady was accordingly summoned to Paris, to explain, if he could, his conduct in the matter. The order for his appearance there came down at once, and I, having nothing to detain me at St. Omer, resolved to accompany my friend for a few days at least, before I returned to England. Our arrangements were easily made; and the same night we received the adjutant-general's letter, we started by post for Paris.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

St. Denis.

WE were both suddenly awakened from a sound sleep in the *calèche*, by the loud cracking of the postillion's whip, the sounds of street noises, and the increased rattle of the wheels over the unequal pavement. We started up just as, turning round in his saddle, and pointing with his long whip to either side of him, the fellow called out —

“Paris, Messieurs, Paris! This is Faubourg St.

Denis; — there before you lies the Rue St. Denis. *Sacristi*, the streets are as crowded as at noon-day.”

By this time we had rubbed the sleep from our eyelids and looked about us, and truly the scene before us was one to excite all our astonishment. The Quartier St. Denis was then in the occupation of the Austrian troops, who were not only billeted in the houses, but bivouacked in the open streets — their horses picquetted in long files along the *pavé*, the men asleep around their watch-fires, or burnishing arms and accoutrements beside them. The white-clad cuirassier from the Danube, the active and sinewy Hungarian, the tall and swarthy Croat, were all there, mixed up among groups of peasant girls coming in to market with fowls and eggs. Carts of forage and waggons full of all manner of provisions were surrounded by groups of soldiers and country people, trading amicably together, as though the circumstances which had brought them together were among the ordinary events of commerce.

Threading our way slowly through these, we came upon the Jäger encampment, their dark green uniform and brown carbines giving that air of *sombre* to their appearance, so striking after the steel-clad cuirassier and the bright helmets of the dragoons. Farther on, around a fountain, were a body of dismounted dragoons, their tall calpacks and scarlet trowsers bespeaking them Polish lancers — their small but beautifully formed white horses pawed the ground, and splashed the water round them, till the dust and foam rose high above them. But the strangest of all were the tall, gigantic figures, who, stretched alongside of their horses, slept in the very middle of the wide street. Lifting their heads lazily for a moment, they would

gaze on us as we passed, and then lie down again to sleep. Their red beards hung in masses far down upon their breasts, and their loose trowsers of a reddish dye but half concealed boots of undressed skin. Their tall lances were piled around them; but these were not wanting to prove that the savage, fierce-looking figures before us were the Cossacks of the Don, thus come, for many a hundred mile, to avenge the slaughter of Borodino and the burning of Moscow. As we penetrated farther into the city, the mixture of nation and costume became still more remarkable. The erect and soldier-like figure of the Prussian — the loose, wild-eyed Tartar — the brown-clad Russian, with russet beard and curved sabre — the stalwart Highlander, with nodding plume and waving tartan — the Bashkir, with naked scimitar — the gorgeous hussar of Hungary — the tall and manly form of the English guardsman — passed and re-passed before us, adding, by the babel of discordant sound, to the wild confusion of the scene.

It was a strange sight to see the savage soldier from the steppes of Russia — the dark-eyed, heavy-browed Gallician — the yellow-haired Saxon — the rude native of the Caucasus — who had thus given themselves a “rendezvous” in the very heart of European civilization, wandering about — now stopping to admire some magnificent palace, now gazing with greedy wonder at the rich display of some jeweller, or the costly and splendid dresses which were exhibited in the shop windows; while here and there were gathered groups of men whose looks of undisguised hate and malignity were bent unceasingly upon the moving mass — their “*bourgeois*” dress could not

conceal that they were the old soldiers of the empire — the men of Wagram, of Austerlitz, of Jena, and of Wilna — who now witnessed within their own capital the awful retribution of their own triumphant aggressions.

As the morning advanced the crowds increased, and as we approached the "Place Carousel," regiments poured in from every street to the morning parade. Among these, the Russian *garde* — the *Bonnets d'or* — were conspicuous for the splendour of their costume and the soldier-like precision of their movements; the clash of their brass cymbals, and the wild strains of their martial music, adding indescribably to their singular appearance. As the infantry drew up in line, we stopped to regard them, when, from the place Louis Quinze, the clear notes of a military band rang out a quick step, and the twenty-eighth British marched in to the air of "The Young May Moon." O'Grady's excitement could endure no longer. He jumped up in the *calèche*, and, waving his hat above his head, gave a cheer that rang through the long corridor beneath the Louvre. The Irish regiment caught up the cry, and a yell as wild as ever rose above the din of battle shook the air. A Cossack picquet then cantering up, suddenly halted, and, leaning down upon their horses' manes, seemed to listen; and then dashing spurs into their flanks, made the circuit of the place at full gallop, while their "Hurra!" burst forth with all the wild vehemence of their savage nature.

"We shall get into some precious scrape with all this," said O'Grady, as, overcome with laughing, he fell back into the *calèche*.

Such was my own opinion; so, telling the postillion to turn short into the next street, we hurried away unperceived, and drove, with all the speed we could muster, for the Rue St. Honoré. The Hôtel de la Paix fortunately had room for us; and, ordering our breakfasts, we adjourned to dress, each resolving to make the most of his few hours at Paris.

I had just reached the breakfast-room, and was conning over the morning papers, when O'Grady entered, in full uniform, his face radiant with pleasure, and the same easy, jaunty swagger in his walk as on the first day I met him.

"When do you expect to have your audience, Phil?" said I.

"I have had it, my boy. It's all over, finished, completed. Never was any thing so successful. I talked over the old adjutant in such a strain, that, instead of dreaming about a court martial on us, the worthy man is seriously bent on our obtaining compensation for the loss of the drag. He looked somewhat serious when I entered; but when once I made him laugh, the game was my own. I wish you saw him wiping his clear old eyes as I described the covey of gendarmes taking the air. However, the main point is — the regiment is to be moved up to Paris, the commissaire is to receive a reprimand, our claim for some ten thousand francs is to be considered, and I am to dine with the adjutant to-day, and tell the story after dinner."

"Do you know, Phil, I have a theory, that an Irishman never begins to prosper but just at the moment that any one else would surely be ruined."

"Don't make a theory of it, Jack, for it may turn

out unlucky. But the practice is pretty much what you represent it. Fortune never treats people so well as when they don't care a fig about her. She's exactly like a lady patroness — confoundedly imper-tinent, if you'll bear it; but all smiles, if you won't. Have you ever met Tom Burke — 'Burke of ours,' as they called him, I believe, in half the regiments in the service?"

"No; never."

"Well, the loss is yours. Tom's a fine fellow in his way; and if you could get him to tell you his story — or rather one of his stories, for his life is a succession of them — perhaps you would find that this same theory of yours has some foundation. We'll pick him up one of these days, and I'll introduce you. But now, Jack, I have a piece of news for you. What do you think of it, my lad? — Lady Charlotte Hinton's at Paris."

"My mother here? Is it possible?"

"Yes. Her ladyship resides No. 4, Place Vendôme, opposite the Hôtel de Londres. There's accuracy for you."

"And who is with her? My father?"

"No. The general is expected in a few days. Lady Julia, I believe, is her only companion."

There was a kind of reserve suddenly in his manner, as he mentioned this name, which made us both pause for a few seconds.

At length O'Grady broke the awkwardness of the silence by saying, in his usual laughing way —

"I contrived to pick up all the gossip of Paris in half an hour. The town is full of English — and such English too! — the Cossacks are civilized people

of quiet, retiring habits, compared to them. I verily believe the French are more frightened by our conviviality than ever they were by the bayonets of the allies. I'm dying to hear your lady mother's account of every thing here."

"What say you, then, if you come along with me? I'm becoming very impatient to see my people once more. Julia will, I'm certain, be very amusing."

"Ah! and I have a debt of gratitude in that quarter," said O'Grady, hesitatingly. "Lady Julia was so very kind as to extend her protection to that old villain, Corny. I cannot for the life of me understand how she endured him."

"As to that," said I — "Julia has a taste for character; and not even the Chevalier Delany's eccentricity would pain her. So let's forward."

"Did I tell you that De Vere is here?" said O'Grady.

"No; not with my friends, I trust?"

"On the contrary, I ascertained that he does not visit at Lady Charlotte's. He is attached to Lord Cathcart's embassy; he's very little in society, and rarely to be seen but at the *salon*, where he plays tremendously high, loses every night, but re-appears each day with a replenished pocket. But I intend to know the secret of all this, and many other matters, ere long. So now let us proceed."

CHAPTER XXIX.

Paris in 1814.

IF the strange medley of every nation and costume which we beheld on entering Paris surprised us, how much greater was our astonishment when, having finished a hurried breakfast, we issued forth into the crowded streets. Here were assembled among the soldiers of every country, visitors from all parts of Europe, attracted by the novel spectacle thus presented to them; and eager to participate in the pleasures of a capital whose rejoicings, so far from being checked by the sad reverse of fortune, were now at the highest pitch; and the city much more resembled the gay resort of an elated people than a town occupied by the troops of conquering enemies. The old soldier of the empire alone grieved in the midst of this general joy; with the downfall of Napoleon died his every hope. The spirit of conquest, by which for so many years the army had been intoxicated, was annihilated by the one line that signed the treaty of Fontainebleau; and thus among the gay and laughing groups that hurried onward, might now and then be seen some veteran of the old guard scowling with contemptuous look upon that fickle populace, as eager to celebrate the downfall, as ever they had been to greet the glory of their nation.

Nothing more strikingly marked the incongruous host that filled the city, than the different guards of honour which were mounted at the several hotels where officers and generals of distinction resided. At this time the regulation was not established which prevailed somewhat later, and gave to the different armies of the allies the duty of mounting all the guards in rotation:

and now at one door might be seen the tall cuirassier of Austria, his white cloak falling in heavy folds over the flank and haunches of his coal black horse, looking like some Templar of old; at another the plumed bonnet of a Highlander fluttered in the breeze, as some hardy mountaineer paced to and fro; his gray eye and stern look unmoved by the eager and prying gaze of the crowd that stopped to look upon so strange and singular a costume; here was the impatient schimmel of some Hungarian hussar, pawing the ground with restless eagerness, as his gay dolman slashed with gold glittered in the sun. The jäger from Bohemia — the deadly marksman with the long rifle; the savage Tartar of the Ukraine, devouring his meal on his guard, and turning his dark suspicious eye around him, lest every passer-by might mean some treachery — all denoted that some representative of their country dwelt within, while every now and then the clank of a musket would be heard, as a heavy *porte-cochère* opened to permit the passage of an equipage, as strange and as characteristic as the guard himself. Here would issue the heavy “waggon” of some German prince, with emblazoned panels and scarlet hammer-cloth; the horses as fat and lethargic as the smoking and moustached figure they were drawing; there was the low droschki of a Russian — three horses abreast — their harness tinkling with brass bells as the spirited animals plunged and curvetted along; the quiet and elegant-looking phaeton of English build, with its perfection of appointment, rolled along with its deep woody sound beside the quaint, old-fashioned caleche of Northern Germany, above whose cumbrous side-panels the heads of the passengers were visible only; nor were the horsemen

less dissimilar — the stately Prussian, with his heel *aplomb* beneath his elbow; the Cossack, with short stirrups, crouched upon his horse's mane; the English horse artilleryman powdering along with massive accoutrements and gigantic steed; the Polish light cavalry soldier, standing high in his stirrups, and turning his restless eye on every side, were all subjects for our curiosity and wonder.

The novelty of the spectacle seemed, however, to have greatly worn off for the Parisians; who rarely noticed the strange and uncouth figures that every moment passed before their eyes, and now talked away as unconcernedly amid the scene of tumult and confusion, as though nothing new or remarkable was going on about them; their very indifference and *insouciance* one of the strangest sights we witnessed.

Our progress, which at the first was a slow one, ceased entirely at the corner of the palace, where a considerable crowd was now collected. Although we asked of the by-standers, no one could tell what was going forward; but the incessant roars of laughter showed that something droll or ridiculous had occurred. O'Grady, whose taste in such matters would suffer no denial, elbowed his way through the mob, I following as well as I was able. When we reached the first rank of the spectators, we certainly needed no explanation of the circumstances to make us join in the mirth about us.

It was a single combat of a very remarkable description. A tall Cossack, with a long red beard now waving wildly on every side, was endeavouring to recover his mutcka cap from a little decrepid old fellow, from whom he had stolen a basket of eggs. The eggs were all broken on the ground; and the little man

danced among them like an infuriated fiend, flourishing a stick all the while in the most fearful fashion. The Cossack, whose hand at every moment sought the naked knife that was stuck in his girdle, was obliged to relinquish his weapon by the groans of the mob, who unequivocally showed that they would not permit foul play; and being thus unarmed, could make nothing of an adversary whose contemptible appearance caused all the ridicule of the scene. Meanwhile the little fellow, his clothes in rags, and his head surmounted by a red Cossack mutcka, capered about like nothing human, uttering the most frightful sounds of rage and passion. At length, in a paroxysm of fury, he dealt the tall Cossack a rap over the temples which made him reel again. Scarcely had the blow descended, when, stung by the insult and the jeers of the mob, the enraged savage grasped his knife. With one spring he pounced upon the little man; but as he did so, a strong hand from behind seized him by the collar, and with one tremendous jerk hurled him back upon the crowd, where he fell stunned and senseless.

I had only time to perceive that it was O'Grady who had come to the rescue, when the old fellow, turning fully round, looked up in his face, and, without evincing any emotion of surprise, or wonder, or even of gratitude, croaked out —

“And it's standin' looking on ye wor all the time, and I fighting my sowle out! Ugh! bad luck to sarvice! look at my coat and small clothes! Ay, you may laugh, ye grinning bastes as ye are — and a basket of fresh eggs in smithereens, and this Friday!”

The convulsions of laughter which this apparition and the speech excited prevented our hearing more.

The mob, too, without understanding a word, were fully sensible of the absurdity of the scene, and a perfect chorus of laughter rang through the street.

“And my elegant beaver — see it now!” said Corny — for we hope our reader recognises him — as he endeavoured to empty the batter from his head-piece, and restore it to shape. “Ugh! the haythens — the Turks! See now, Master Phil, it’s warning I’m giving you this minit — here, where I stand. May the divil — Ah! if ye dare, ye eternal robber!” This elegant exordium was directed to the poor Cossack, who, having regained his feet, was skulking away from the field, throwing as he went a lingering look at his red cap, which Mr. Delany still wore as a spoil of his victory.

We now made our way through the crowd, followed by Corny, whose angry looks on every side elicited peals of laughter; and thus accompanied we approached the massive *porte-cochère* of a large hotel in the Place Vendôme, where a “Swiss,” in full costume of porter, informed us that Lady Charlotte Hinton resided.

While I endeavoured to pass on, he interposed his burly person, informing me, in very short phrase, that her ladyship did not receive before four o’clock.

“Arrah, hould your prate!” cried Corny; “sure it’s the woman’s son you’re talking to. — Two pair of stairs to your left hand, and the first doore in the passage. — Look at the crowd there, the lazy craytures! that has nothing better to do than follow a respectable man. Be off! Bad luck to yez! ye ought to be crying over the disgrace ye’re in. — Be the light that shines! but you desarved it well.”

Leaving Corny to his oration before the mob, of which, happily for the safety of his own skin, they did

not comprehend one word, I took the direction he mentioned; and soon found out the door, on which a visiting card with my mother's name was fastened.

We were now introduced into a large and splendidly-furnished saloon, with all that lightness and elegance of decoration which in a foreign apartment is the compensation — a poor one sometimes — for the more comfortable look of our English houses; the room was empty, but the morning papers and all the new publications of the day were scattered about with profusion; consigning my friend for a short time to these, I followed the *femme de chambre*, who had already brought in my card to my mother, to her ladyship's dressing-room. The door was opened noiselessly by the maid, who whispered my name; a gentle "let him come in" followed, and I entered. My mother was seated before a glass, under the hands of a coiffeur, and dared not turn her head. As I approached she reached me her hand, however, which having kissed dutifully, I drew my chair, and sat down beside her. "My dear boy," said she, as her eyes turned towards me, and a tear fell from the lid and trickled down her cheek; in spite of the unnatural coldness of such a meeting, the words, the accents, and the look that accompanied them, came home to my heart, and I was glad to hide my emotion by again pressing my lips to her hand. Having kindly informed me that the ceremony she was then submitting to, was imperative, inasmuch as if she had not M. Dejoncourt then, she could not have him at all — that his time was so filled up, every moment of it, from eight in the morning till eleven at night, that the emperor Alexander himself couldn't obtain his services, if he wished for them —

she proceeded to give me some details of my father, by which I could learn that the change in his circumstances had never been made known to her, and that she had gone on since we last met, in her old career of extravagance and expense — the indulgence of which, and the cares of her ever-declining health, had given her abundant occupation.

As I looked at her beautiful features and delicately fair complexion, upon which time had scarcely laid a touch, I sighed to think at what a frightful sacrifice of feeling, of duty, and of happiness too, such loveliness had been purchased. If the fine pencilling of that brow had never known a wrinkle, the heart had never throbbed to one high or holy thought — if the smile sat easily on the lip, it was the habitual garb of fashionable captivation, and not the indication of one kind thought, or one affectionate feeling; I felt shocked, too, that I could thus criticise my mother, but in truth for a minute or two I forgot she was such.

“And Julia,” said I, at length — “what of her?”

“Very handsome indeed — strikingly so. Beulwitz, the emperor’s aid-de-camp admires her immensely. I am sincerely glad that you are come, dear John. You know Julia’s fortune has all been saved; but of that another time: the first point now is to secure you a ticket for this ball, and how to do it, I’m sure I know not.”

“My dear mother, believe me I have not the slightest desire —”

“How very unkind you are, to think we could separate from you after such an absence; besides, Julia would be seriously offended, and I think with cause: — but the ticket — let’s consider about that. Dejon-

court, is it true that the Princess de Nassau was refused a card for the ball?"

"*Oui, mi ladi.* The King of Prussia has sent her one of his, and is to take her; and Madame la Duchesse de St. Bieve is so angry at being left out, that she tried to get up an alarm of conspiracy in the *faubourg*, to prevent the sovereigns from going."

"But they will go, surely — won't they?"

"Ah, to be sure. *Pardieu*, they would say to-morrow that they had been omitted too, if they didn't appear."

"What are we to do?" said her ladyship with energy. "Grammont can be of no use here; for unfortunately these people are not French."

"What then?" said I; "it is some of the crowned heads who are the entertainers."

"Oh, no; indeed I don't know who they are; nor do I know any one who does. The only fact of importance is, that this is their third *fête*; the two first were the most brilliant things ever given in Paris — that the Emperor of Russia always dances there — the King of Prussia makes his whist party — that Blucher takes the head of one of the supper-tables — and, in a word, Talleyrand himself has employed more diplomacy to secure an extra ticket, than he has often dispensed in carving out a new monarchy."

My mother handed me a splendidly embossed card, as she spoke, upon which, in letters of pale burnished gold, were inscribed the following words — "Madame de Roni, née Cassidy de Kilmainham, prie honneur," &c. — a burst of laughing at the absurdity of the title, stopped my reading further.

"She's an Italian, possibly," said my mother.

"I should think not," I replied; "the née Cassidy de Kilmainham smacks of something nearer home — what think you of Ireland?"

"Ireland! Are these people Irish?" said she, starting with horror at the thought. "I trust, my dear John, you would not think proper to jest on such a subject."

"My dear mother, I never heard of them before; the only thing that strikes me is the name. Cassidy is assuredly more Milesian than Roman."

"But she has birth; that's certain," replied my mother proudly.

Not caring to argue the point, which, after all, resolved itself into the question that the lady was the child of somebody, and that somebody was called "Cassidy," I began to meditate on the singularity of such a phase in life as the entertainer of sovereigns, kaisers, kings, princes, archdukes, and ambassadors, being a person utterly unknown.

"But here's Grammont," said my mother as a gentle tap was heard at the door, and the count entered; the only change in his appearance since last I saw him being the addition of another cordon to his blue coat, and a certain springiness in his walk, which I afterwards remarked as common among all the returned *émigrés* at the restoration.

"*Que diable faut-il faire,*" said the count entering, "with this Madame de Roni? she refuses all the world. Ah, Jack, *mon cher*, how do you do? — safe and sound from all the perils of these terrible French, that cut you all to pieces in the Peninsula. But only think, *mi ladi*, no card for la Duchesse de Tavanne; Madame

de Givry left out; *Sacristi!* I hope there is nothing against *ce pauvre* Roi de Prusse."

"Well, and here is John," said my mother: "what are we to do about him?"

My renewed disclosure of any wish in the matter was cut short by a look of reproof, and I waited the whole discussion with patience.

"Never was there such a difficulty," said the count, musing. "There is certainly nothing to be done through the worthy husband of madame. Dejoncourt and two or three more gave him a *dîner en gourmande* at Verry's, to seduce him; and after his fifth flask of champagne he frankly confessed he was sorry he could not return their civilities as he wished. 'I'll entertain you here, and have Blucher and Platoff, Fouché, and any one else you like to meet you. I'll introduce you to old Prussia and the Czar whenever you please; you shall have permission to shoot at Fontainebleau any day you mention; but as to Madame de Roni, she is devilish exclusive; I really cannot manage that for you.'"

"I wish you could prevail on yourself to be serious," said my mother, in nowise pleased with the jocular spirit the count's anecdote had excited; "but here is Julia — what does she advise?"

As my mother spoke, the door opened, and my cousin appeared. Her figure had more of the roundness of womanhood, and her face, though paler, was fuller, and its expression had assumed a more decided character than when I last saw her. Her winning smile and her graceful carriage were all unchanged; and her low soft voice never struck me as more fascinating than when she held out her hand and said —

“My dear cousin! how happy it makes me to see you again!”

Her dark blue eyes were tearful as she spoke, and her lip — that haughty lip — trembled. A strange wild thrill crept through my heart as I pressed her hand within both of mine — a vague feeling which I dared not suffer to dwell in my mind, and yet feared lest when it should depart, that I had lost my chance of happiness. Yes! there are times when a man, without the admixture of any coxcombry in the feeling — without a particle of vanity — nay, with a deep sense of his own unworthiness, can ask himself — Does this woman like me? And at such moments, if his own heart give not the ready answer, it were far better that he sought not the reply from his reason.

It was only when my mother asked, for the second time, what was to be done about John's ticket, that Julia seemed aware of the question, a slight — a very slight curving of her lip showing the while the sense she entertained of such an inquiry, after long years of separation; and at last, as if unable to repress the indignation of the moment, she said abruptly —

“But, of course, as we shall not think of going to-night —”

“We not go! *Eh, pardieu!* why not?” said the count.

“The colonel below stairs begs to say that he will call somewhat later,” said the *femme-de-chambre* at this juncture.

“The colonel! Whom does she mean?”

“Oh, my friend O'Grady. Poor fellow! I have been forgetting him all this while. So allow me to

join him, and we'll wait for your appearance in the drawing-room."

"I remember him perfectly," said my mother; "an agreeable person, I think. So take Julia and the count with you, and I'll follow as soon as I can."

Julia blushed deeply, and as suddenly grew pale again as my mother spoke. I knew that she had always treated my friend with hauteur and reserve, without any assignable reason, and had long determined that when an opportunity arose, I would endeavour to get rid of the unjust impression she had somehow conceived of my warmest, truest friend. This was not, however, the time for explanations; and I merely said, as I offered my arm —

"Poor O'Grady has been badly wounded; but I think he's now getting on favourably."

She said something in reply, but the words were lost in the noise of descending the stairs. Just as we reached the landing, I caught a glimpse of my friend issuing from the *porte cochère*, and only in time to call him by his name —

"Holloa, Phil! Don't go away."

As he turned back towards the drawing-room, he cried out —

"It's only this instant, Jack, I remembered how very awkward it was of me to come here with you at this hour. You have, of course, so much to say and hear after your absence —"

The sight of my fair cousin cut short his speech, as she stood near the door with her hand out to receive him. As O'Grady took her taper fingers within his own, there was an air of cold distance in his manner that actually offended me: bowing deeply, he said

a few brief words in a tone of gravity and stiffness quite unusual with him; and then, turning to Grammont, shook his hand with a warmth and cordiality most markedly different. I only dared to glance at Julia, but as I did so I could mark an expression of haughty displeasure that settled on her brow, while her heightened colour made her turn away towards the window.

I was myself so much annoyed by the manner in which O'Grady had received advances which I had never seen made to any one before, that I was silent. Even Grammont saw the awkwardness of all parties so much in need of his intervention, that he at once opened the whole negociation of the ball to O'Grady, describing with a Frenchman's volubility and sarcasm the stratagems and devices which were employed to obtain invitations — the triumph of the successful, the despairing malice of the unfortunate — heightening his narrative by the mystery of the fair hostess, who — herself unknown, unheard of till now — was at this moment at the pinnacle of fashion, dictating the laws and distributing the honours of the *beau monde* to the greatest sovereigns of Europe.

"She is very beautiful, no doubt?" asked O'Grady.

"*Oui — pas mal,*" said Grammont, with that all-explaining shrug of the shoulders by which a foreigner conveys so much.

"Very rich, perhaps?"

"*Millionnaire!*" said the Frenchman, in a tone of exultation that bespoke his full acquiescence in that surmise at least.

"And her rank?"

"Ah! I don't read riddles. All I know is, her house is the best thing at Paris; she has secured old Cambacere's *chef de cuisine*; has bought up the groom of the chambers of the ex-emperor; keeps an estafette going on the Strasbourg road for *pâtés de fois gras*; and is on such terms with the sovereigns, that she has their private bands to play at all her parties. *Que voulez vous!*"

"Nothing more, indeed!" said O'Grady, laughing. "Such admirable supremacy in the world of *bon ton* it would be rank heresy to question farther, and I no longer wonder at the active canvass for her invitations."

"*Oui, parbleu!*" said the Frenchman gaily. "If Monsieur the Comte d'Artois does not exert himself, people will be more proud of a ticket to these balls, than of the Croix de St. Louis. For my own part, I think of wearing mine over the cordon."

As he spoke, he flourished his card of invitation in the air, and displayed it in his bosom.

"Madame de Roni, née Cassidy de Kilmainham," said O'Grady, bursting into a perfect roar of laughing. "This is glorious, Jack. Did you see this?"

"See — eh? — to be sure; and what then?"

But O'Grady's mirth had burst all bounds, and he sat back in an arm-chair laughing immoderately. To all our questions he could give no other reply than renewed bursts of merriment, which, however enjoyed by himself, were very provoking to us.

"He knows her," whispered Grammont in my ear; "be assured he knows madame."

"Jack, where shall we meet in half an hour?" said Phil at length, jumping up and wiping his eyes.

"Here, if you like," said I: "I shall not leave this till you return."

"Be it so," said he; and then with a bow to my cousin and an easy nod to Grammont, O'Grady took his hat and departed.

Grammont now looked at his watch, and remembering some half-dozen very important appointments, took his leave also, leaving me once more, after so long an interval, *tête-à-tête* with Julia.

There were so many things to talk over since we had met, so many reminiscences which each moment called up, that I never thought of the hours as they ran over; and it was only by Lady Charlotte's appearance in the drawing-room that we were apprized it was already past four o'clock, and that the tide of her morning visitors would now set in, and break up all hopes of continuing our colloquy.

"Where is your friend?" said my mother, as she carried her eyes languidly round the spacious apartment.

"Gone some hours ago: but he promised to take me up here. We shall see him soon, I suspect."

"Colonel O'Grady," said a servant; and my cousin had just time to leave the room by one door, as he entered by another.

Advancing to my mother with a manner of respectful ease which he possessed in perfection, O'Grady contrived in a few brief words to resume the ground he had formerly occupied in her acquaintance, throwing out as he went an occasional compliment to her looks, so naturally and unaffectedly done as not to need acknowledgment or reply, but yet with sufficient *empressement* to show interest.

"I have heard since my arrival that you were interested about this ball, and took the opportunity to secure you some tickets, which, though late, some of your friends may care for."

He presented my mother as he spoke with several blank cards of invitation, who, as she took them, could not conceal her astonishment, nor repress the look of curiosity, which she could scarcely repel in words, as to how he had accomplished a task the highest people in Paris had failed in. I saw what was passing in her mind, and immediately said —

"My mother would like to know your secret about these same cards, O'Grady, for they have been a perfect subject of contention here for the last three weeks."

"Her ladyship must excuse me — at least for the present — if I have one secret I cannot communicate to her," said O'Grady smiling. "Let me only assure her, no one shall know it before she herself does."

"And there is a secret?" said Lady Charlotte eagerly.

"Yes, there is a secret," replied O'Grady with a most ludicrous gravity of tone.

"Well, at least we have profited by it, and so we may wait in patience. Your friend Colonel O'Grady will give us the pleasure of his company at dinner, I hope," continued my mother with her most winning smile.

O'Grady declined, having already accepted the invitation of the adjutant-general, but begged he might be permitted to join our party at the ball; which being graciously acceded to by my mother, we both made

our bows and sauntered out to see more of the sights of Paris.

"Come, Phil," said I, when we were once more alone, "what is the secret? Who is Madame de Roni?"

"Not even to you, Jack," was his answer, and we walked on in silence.

CHAPTER XXX.

The "Roni fête."

THERE is no epidemic more catching than excitement. The fussy manner and feverish bustle of the people about you, are sure, after a time, to communicate themselves to you—the very irritation they create being what the physicians call a predisposing cause. I became an illustration in point, as the hour of this ball drew nigh. At first I could not but wonder how, in the midst of such stupendous events as were then taking place—in the heart of a city garrisoned by an enemy—with every thing that could wound national pride and offend national honour—even French levity could raise itself to the enjoyment of fashionable frivolity; but, by degrees, the continual recurrence of the subject familiarized my mind to it, wore off my first and more natural impressions, and at last I began, like my neighbours, not only to listen with patience, but even to join in the various discussions with animation and interest.

No sooner had the report gained currency that Lady Charlotte was in possession of blank invitations, than our hotel was besieged by half Paris—the unfortunate endeavouring, by every species of flattery, and every imaginable stratagem, to obtain tickets; the lucky ones all anxious to find out the mystery of her

ladyship's success, which at first seemed almost incredible. The various surmises, guesses, hints, allusions, and subterfuges which followed each other in rapid succession, as this motley mob of fashionables came and went, and went and came again, amused me considerably—the more so, perhaps, as the occasion called into full play all my cousin Julia's powers of flippant raillery and sarcasm, both of which she exercised without scruple, but never within range of discovery by any of her victims.

Every thing gave way to the convenience of this splendid *fête*. The eight o'clock dinner was anticipated by full two hours — no other subject of conversation was ever broached by the company — and at nine the carriages were ordered to the door, it being wisely calculated that if we reached our destination at eleven we should esteem ourselves fortunate.

How often, as the dashing equipage whirls past to some scene of pleasure, where beauty, and rank, and riches await the sated votary of fashion, will the glare of the carriage lamps fall upon the gloomy footway, where, wet and weary, some melancholy figure steals along with downcast head and plodding step — his thoughts turned ever to some accustomed scene of wretchedness, where want and misery, disease, neglect, decay, all herd together, and not even hope can enter. The poor man, startled, looks up — the rich one, lolling back upon his easy cushion, casts a downward glance — their eyes meet — it is but a second — there is no sympathy between them — the course of one lies north, the other south. Thus at each moment did my sad heart turn away from all the splendour of the preparation about me, to wonder with myself how, even for

an instant, I could forget my own path in life, which, opening with every prospect of happiness, yet now offered not a hope for the future. Between these two alternate states the hours crept on. As I sat beside Julia in the carriage, I couldn't but mark that something weighed also on her spirits. More silent than usual, she replied, when spoken to, with effort, and more than once returned wrong answers to my mother, who talked away unceasingly of the ball and the guests.

It was near midnight when we drove into the large archway of the Hôtel de Rohan, where Madame de Roni held her court. Brilliantly lighted with lamps of various colours, the very equipages were made a part of the spectacle, as they shone in bright and changeful hues, reflected from gorgeous housings, gilded trappings, and costly liveries. A large, dark-coloured travelling carriage, with a single pair of horses, stood in the corner of the court, the only thing to distinguish it being two mounted light dragoons, who waited beside it, and a chasseur in green and gold uniform, who stood at the door. This simple equipage belonged to the King of Prussia. Around on every side were splendidly appointed carriages, glittering with emblazonry and gilding, from which, as the guests descended and entered the marble vestibule, names of European celebrity were called out, and repeated from voice to voice along the lofty corridors. Le Prince de Schwartzenberg, Count Pozzo di Borgo, Le Duc de Dalberg, mi Lord Cathcart, le Comte de Nesselrode, Monsieur Talleyrand de Perigord, with others equally noble and exalted, followed in rapid succession.

Our turn came at last; and as we reached the hall we found O'Grady waiting for our arrival.

"There's no use in attempting to get forward for some time," said he; "so follow me, and I'll secure you a more comfortable place to wait in."

As he spoke he passed through the hall, and, whispering a few words to a servant, a door was opened in the wainscot, admitting us to a small and neatly fitted up library, where a good fire and some easy chairs awaited us.

"I see your surprise," said O'Grady, as my mother looked about her with astonishment at his perfect acquaintance with the whole locality; "but I can't explain — it's part of my secret: meanwhile, Jack, I have another for your ear," said he, in a low whisper, as he drew me aside into a corner. "I have made a very singular discovery, Jack, to-day, and I have a notion it may lead to more. I met, by accident, at the adjutant-general's table, the brother of a French officer whose life I saved at Nivelle; he remembered my name in a moment, and we became sworn friends. I accepted his offer of a seat in his carriage to this ball, and on the way he informed me that he was the chief of the secret police of Paris, whose business it is to watch all the doings of the regular police and report upon them to Fouché, whose spies are in every *salon* and at every dinner-table in the capital. I have no time at present to repeat any of the extraordinary stories he told me of this horrible system; but just as we entered the court-yard of this hotel, our carriage was jammed up in the line, and detained for some minutes. Guillemain suddenly let down the glass, and gave a low, peculiar whistle, which, if I had not been

paying considerable attention to every thing about him, might have escaped my notice. In about a minute after a man, with a hat slouched over his face, and a large cravat covering his mouth, approached the carriage. They conversed together for some time, and I could perceive that the new comer spoke his French in a broken manner and with a foreign accent. By a slight movement of the horses one of the lamps threw the light full upon this man's face; I fixed my eyes rapidly on him, and recognised — whom, think you? — but you'd never guess — no other than your old antagonist, Ulick Burke!"

"Ulick Burke! You must have been mistaken."

"No, no. I knew him at once: the light rested on him for full five minutes, and I had time enough to scan every feature of his face. I could swear to the man now. He left us at last, and I watched him, 'till he disappeared among the crowd of servants that filled the court-yard.

"'That's one of your people,' said I, carelessly, as Guillemain drew up the glass, and sat back in the carriage.

"'Yes, and a thorough scoundrel he is — capable of any thing.'

"'He's not French,' said I, with the same indifference of manner I had feigned at first.

"Guillemain started as I spoke; and I half feared I had destroyed all by venturing too much; at length, after a short pause he replied — 'You're right, he's not French; but we have them of all nations — Poles, Swedes, Germans, Italians, Greeks — that fellow is English.'

“‘Say Irish, rather,’ said I, determining to risk all — to know all.

“‘You know him, then?’ said Guillemain hurriedly; ‘where did you see Fitzgerald?’

“‘Fitzgerald!’ said I, repeating the name after him; and then affecting disappointment, added — ‘that’s not the name.’

“‘Ha! I knew you were mistaken,’ said Guillemain with animation; ‘the fellow told me he defies recognition; and I certainly have tried him often among his countrymen, and he has never been detected; and yet he knows the English thoroughly and intimately. It was through him I first found out these very people we are going to.’

“Here, Jack, he entered upon a long account of our worthy host, who, with great wealth, great pretensions, and as great vulgarity, came to Paris some weeks ago in that mighty flood of all sorts of people that flocked here since the peace. Their desire to be ranked among the fashionable entertainers of the day was soon reported to the minister of police, who, after considering how far such a house might be useful, where persons of all shades of political opinion might meet — friends of the Bourbons, Jacobites, Napoleonists, the men of ’88, and the admirers of the old *régime* — measures were accordingly taken that their invitations should go out to the first persons in Paris, and more still, should be accepted by them.”

“While these worthy people are therefore distributing their hospitalities with all the good faith imaginable, their hotel is nothing more nor less than a *cabinet de police*, where Fouché and his agents are

unravelling the intrigues of Paris, or weaving fresh ones for their own objects."

"Infamous system! but how comes it, Phil, that they have never discovered their anomalous position?"

"What a question, Jack! Vulgar pretension is a triple shield that no eye can pierce; and as you know the parties —"

"Know them! no, I never heard of them before."

"What, Jack! Is your memory so short lived; and yet there was a pretty girl in the house who might have rested longer in your memory."

The announcement of Lady Charlotte and my cousin's names by the servant at the foot of the stairs, broke up our conference; and we had only time to join our party as we fell into that closely wedged phalanx that wound its slow length up the spacious staircase. O'Grady's last words had excited my curiosity to the highest pitch; but as he preceded me with my mother on his arm, I was unable to ask for an explanation.

At last we reached the antechamber, from which a vista of *salons* suddenly broke upon the view; and although anticipating much, I had formed no conception whatever of the splendour of the scene before me. More brilliant than noonday itself, the room was a blaze of wax lights; the ceilings of fretted gold and blue enamel, glittering like a gorgeous firmament; the walls were covered with pictures in costly frames of Venetian taste; but the decorations, magnificent and princely as they were, were as nothing to that splendid crowd of jewelled dames and glittering nobles; of all that was distinguished in beauty, in rank, in military glory, or in the great contest of political life. Here were the greatest names of Europe — the kings and

princes of the earth, the leaders of mighty armies, the generals of a hundred battles — here was the collective greatness of the world — all that can influence mankind, hereditary rank, military power, stupendous intellect, beauty, wealth — mixing in the vast vortex of fashionable dissipation, and plunging into all the excesses of voluptuous pleasure. The band of the Imperial Guard stationed near the staircase, were playing with all the delicious softness of their national instrument — the Russian Horn — a favourite mazurka of the emperor's as we entered; and a partial silence reigned among the hundred listeners.

O'Grady conveyed my mother through the crowd to a seat, where, having placed my cousin beside her, he once more came near me.

"Jack," whispered he, "come a little this way." He drew aside a curtain as he spoke, and we entered a boudoir, where a buffet of refreshments was placed; here the scene was ludicrous in the extreme, from the incongruous mixture of persons of so many nations and languages who were chatting away and hobnobbing to each other in all the dismembered phrases of every tongue in Europe; roars of laughter, however, poured from one corner of the room, whither O'Grady directed his steps, still holding my arm. A group of Cossack officers in full scarlet costume, their loose trowsers slashed with gold embroidery, and thrust into wide boots of yellow leather, stood in a circle round a person whom we could not yet perceive; but who, we were enabled to discover, was exercising his powers of amusement for this semi-savage audience, whose wild shouts of laughter broke forth at every moment. We made our way at length through the crowd, and my

eyes at last fell upon the figure within. I stared — I rubbed my eyes — I actually began to doubt my very senses, when suddenly turning his joyous face, beaming with good humour towards me, he held forth his hand and called out, "Captain, my darling, the top of the morning to you. This beats Stephen's Green, doesn't it?"

"Mr. Paul Rooney," said I.

"No, no, Monsieur de Roni, if you please," said he, again breaking out into a fit of laughing. "Lord help you, man, I've been christened since I came abroad. Let me present you to my friends." Here Paul poked a tall Cossack in the ribs to attract his attention, and then pointing to me, said — "This is Captain Hinton; his name's a poser; a cross between chincough and a house key. Eh, old fellow?"

"A Tartar grin" was the reply to this very intelligible speech; but a bumper of champagne made every thing comprehensible between them. Mr. Rooney's hilarity soon showed me that he had not forgotten his native habits; and was steadily bent upon drinking glass for glass with his company, even though they only came in detachments; with Bashkir chiefs, Pomeranian barons, Rhine graafs, and Polish counts, he seemed as intimate as though he had passed as much of his time in the Caucasus, as the Four Courts; and was as familiar with the banks of the Don as ever he had been with those of the Dodder.

"And is it really our old friend Mrs. Paul who entertains this host of czars and princes?"

"Is it really only now that you've guessed it?" said O'Grady, as he carried me away with him through the saloon. "But I see Lady Charlotte is amongst

her friends, and your cousin is dancing, so now let's make the most of our time. I say, Jack, your lady mother scarcely supposes that her host is the same person she once called on for his bill. By Jove, what a discovery it would be to her; and the little girl she had such a horror of is now the *belle* of Paris. You remember Louisa Bellew, don't you? Seven thousand a year, my boy, and beauty worth double the money; but there she is, and how handsome."

As he spoke, a lady passed us leaning on her partner's arm, her head turned slightly over her shoulder. I caught but one glance, and as I did so, the rushing torrent of blood that mounted to my face made my very brain grow dizzy. I knew not where I stood—I sprang forward to speak to her, and then became rooted to the ground. It was she, indeed—beautiful as ever I had seen her: her pale face wore the very look I had last seen the night I saved her from the flood.

"Did you observe her companion?" said O'Grady, who fortunately had not noticed my confusion. "It was De Vere. I knew he was here; and I suspect I see his plans."

"De Vere!" said I, starting. "De Vere with Miss Bellew! Are you certain?"

"Quite certain—I seldom mistake a face, and his I can't forget. But here's Guillemain. I'll join you in a moment."

So saying, O'Grady left my side, and I saw him take the arm of a small man in black, who was standing at a doorway. The rush of sensations that crowded on me as I stood there alone, made me forget the

time, and I knew not that O'Grady had been above half an hour away when he again came to my side.

"How the plot thickens, Hinton," said he, in a low whisper. "Only think, the villain Burke has actually made the hand and fortune of that lovely girl the price of obtaining secret information from De Vere of the proceedings of the British embassy. Guillemain did not confess this to me, but he spoke in such a way, that with my knowledge of all parties, I made out the clue."

"Burke! but what influence has he over her?"

"None over her, but much over the Rooneys, whom, independent of threats about exposing their real condition in life, he has persuaded that such a marriage for their ward secures them in fashionable society for ever. This with Paul would do nothing; but Madame de Roni, as you know, sets a high price on such a treasure; besides, he is in possession of some family secret about her mother, which he uses as a means of intimidation to Paul, who would rather die than hurt Miss Bellew's feelings. Now, Jack, De Vere only wants intellect to be as great a scoundrel as master Ulick; so we must rescue this poor girl, come what will."

"We must and we will," said I, with a tone of eagerness that made O'Grady start.

"Not a moment is to be lost," said he, after a brief pause. "I'll try what can be done with Guillemain."

An opening of the crowd as he spoke compelled us to fall back, and as we did so, I could perceive that an avenue was made along the room.

"One of the sovereigns," whispered O'Grady.

I leaned forward, and perceived two aids-de-camp in green uniform, who were retreating step by step slowly before some persons further back.

“The Emperor of Russia,” whispered a voice near me; and the same instant I saw the tall and fine-looking figure of Alexander, his broad massive forehead, and frank, manly face turning from side to side as he acknowledged the salutations of the room. On his arm he supported a lady, whose nodding plumes waved in concert with every inclination of the Czar himself. Curious to see what royal personage shared thus with him the homage of the assembly, I stooped to catch a glance — the lady turned — our eyes met — a slight flush coloured her cheek, as she quickly moved her head away — it was Mrs. Paul Rooney herself! yes, she whom I had once seen with an effort to subdue her pride of station, when led in to dinner by some Irish attorney-general, or some going judge of assize, now leaned on the arm of an emperor, and divided with him the honours of the moment!

While O’Grady sought out his new friend, the minister of police, I went in search of my mother and Lady Julia, whom I found surrounded by a knot of their own acquaintances, actively engaged in surmises as to the lady of the house — her rank, fortune, and pretensions. For some time I could not but feel amused at the absurd assertions of many of the party, who affected to know all about Madame de Roni and her secret mission at Paris.

“My dear John,” said my mother in a whisper, “you must find out all about her. Your friend, the colonel, is evidently in the secret. Pray, now, don’t forget it. But really you seem in a dream. There’s

Beulwitz paying Julia all the attention imaginable the entire evening, and you've never gone near her. — *Apropos*, have you seen this ward of Madame de Roni? she is very pretty, and they speak of her as a very suitable person" (this phrase was a kind of cant with my mother and her set, which expressed in brief that a lady was enormously rich and a very desirable match for a man with nothing,) — "I forget the name?"

"Miss Bellew, perhaps," said I, trembling lest any recollection of ever having heard it before should cross her mind.

"Yes, that's the name: somehow it seems familiar to me. Do you know her yet? for my friend Lady Middleton knows every one and will introduce you."

"Oh, I have the pleasure of being acquainted with her already," said I, turning away to hide my confusion.

"That's quite proper," said her ladyship encouragingly. "But here she comes: I think you must introduce me, John."

As my mother spoke, Louisa Bellew came up, leaning on a lady's arm. A moment's hesitation on my part would have only augmented the embarrassment which increased at every instant; so I stepped forward and pronounced her name. No sooner had the words "Miss Bellew" escaped my lips, than she turned round, her large full eyes were fixed upon me doubtingly for a second, and her face grew deep scarlet, and then as suddenly pale again. She made an effort to speak, but could not: a tottering weakness seemed to creep over her frame; and as she pressed her companion's arm closely I heard her mutter —

"Oh, pray move on!"

"Lady Charlotte Hinton — Miss Bellew," said the lady at her side, who had paid no attention whatever to Louisa Bellew's agitated manner.

My mother smiled in her sweetest manner; while Miss Bellew's acknowledgments were made with the most distant coldness.

"My son had deemed himself fortunate enough to be known to you," said Lady Charlotte.

Miss Bellew became pale as death; her very lips were bloodless, as, with a voice tremulous with emotion, she replied —

"We were acquainted once, Madam — but —"

What was to be the remainder of the speech I know not; for as the crowd moved on she passed with it, leaving me like one whose senses were forsaking him one by one. I could only hear my mother say, "How very impertinent!" and then my brain became a chaos. A kind of wild reckless feeling, the savage longing that in moments of dark passion stirs within a man for some act of cruelty, some deed of vengeance, ran through my breast. I had been spurned, despised, disowned by her of whom, through many a weary month, my heart alone was full. I hurried away from the spot, my brain on fire. I saw nothing, I heeded nothing of the bright looks and laughing faces that passed me; scornful pity and contempt for one so low as I was seemed to prevail in every face I looked at. A strange impulse to seek out Lord Dudley de Vere was uppermost in my mind; and as I turned on every side to find him, I felt my arm grasped tightly, and heard O'Grady's voice in my ear —

"Be calm, Jack, for heaven's sake! Your disturbed looks make every one stare at you."

He drew me along with him through the crowd, and at length reached a card-room, where, except the players, no one was present.

"Come, my dear boy, I saw what has annoyed you."

"You saw it!" said I, my eye-balls straining as I spoke.

"Yes, yes; and what signifies it? So very handsome a girl, and the expectation of a large fortune, must always have followers. But you know Lady Julia well enough —"

"Lady Julia!" repeated I, in amazement.

"Yes. I say you know her well enough to believe that Beulwitz is not exactly the person —"

A burst of laughter at his mistake broke from me at the moment; but so wild and discordant was it, that O'Grady misconstrued its meaning, and went at some length to assure me that my cousin's affection for me was beyond my suspicion.

Stunned by my own overwhelming sorrow, I felt no inclination to undeceive him, and let him persist in his error without even a word of reply.

"Rouse yourself, Jack," said he at length. "This depression is unworthy of you, had you even cause for grief. There's many a heart heavier than your own, my boy, where the lip is smiling this minute."

There was a tone of deep affliction in the cadence of his voice as these words fell from him, and he turned away his head as he spoke. Then rallying in an instant, he added —

"Do you know, our dear friend Mrs. Paul has scarcely ventured to acknowledge me to-night? and I feel a kind of devilish spirit of vengeance working

within me in consequence. To cut me! — I that trained her infant mind to greatness — that actually smuggled for her a contraband viceroy, and brought him alive into her dominions! What dire ingratitude! Come, what say you to champagne?”

He poured me out a large glassful as he spoke, and, filling his own, called out laughing —

“Here — I give you a toast. ‘*La Vendetta!*’ Eh, Jack? Corsican vengeance on all who maltreat us!”

Glass after glass followed; and I felt my brain, instead of being excited, grow calmer, steadier; a firm and determined resolution usurped the flitting thoughts and wandering fancies of before.

“They’re moving towards the supper-room,” said O’Grady, who for some time past had talked away, without my paying any attention to what he said.

As we descended the stairs, I heard my mother’s carriage announced, and could just see her and my cousin handed to it by some Austrian officers as we entered the supper-room.

The incessant crash and din of the enormous banquetting-room, its crowd and heat, its gorgeous table equipage and splendid guests, were scarce noticed by me, as I followed O’Grady half mechanically towards the end of the room. For some time I remained stupidly unconscious of all around; and it was only after a very considerable time I descried that immediately in front of where we stood, Mrs. Paul Rooney was seated — the Emperor of Russia on her right, the King of Prussia on her left hand; Schwartzenberg, Blucher, Talleyrand, Nesselrode, and many others equally distinguished, occupying places along the board.

Her jocund laugh and merry voice indeed first attracted my attention.

“By Jove, she does it admirably,” said O’Grady, who for full five minutes had been most critically employed scrutinizing Mrs. Paul’s manner. “Do you remark the tact with which she graduates her attentions to the emperor and the king? and look at the hauteur of her bearing to old Blucher. But hush — what’s coming?”

A kind of suppressed murmur buzzed along the crowded room, which subsiding into a dead silence, the Emperor Alexander rose, and addressing the guests in a few but well-chosen words in English, informed them he had received permission from their amiable and captivating hostess to propose a toast, and he took the opportunity with unqualified delight to give the health of “the Prince Regent.” A perfect thunder of applause acknowledged this piece of gracious courtesy, and a “hip! hip! hurra!” which astonished the foreigners shook the very roof. While the deafening shouts rose on every side, Mrs. Paul wrote a line with her pencil hastily on her card, and turning round gave it to a Cossack aid-de-camp of the emperor to deliver into Mr. Rooney’s hands. Either from the excitement of the moment, or his imperfect acquaintance with English, the unlucky Cossack turned towards the first British officer near him for an explanation, who happened to be O’Grady.

“What does this mean?” said he in French.

“Ah!” said Phil, looking at it, “this is intended for that gentleman at the foot of the table. “You see him yonder — he’s laughing now. Come along, I’ll pilot you towards him.”

Suspecting that O'Grady's politeness had some deeper motive than mere civility, I leaned over his shoulder and asked the reason of it.

"Look here," said he, showing me the card as he spoke, on which was written the following words — "Make the band play 'God save the king;' the emperor wishes it."

"Come with us, Jack," whispered O'Grady, "we had better keep near the door."

I followed them through the dense crowd, who were still cheering with all their might, and at last reached the end of the table, where Paul himself was amusing a select party of Tartar chiefs, Prussian colonels, Irish captains, and Hungarian nobles.

"Look here," said Phil, showing me the card, which in his passage down the room he had contrived to alter, by rubbing out the first part, and interpolating a passage of his own; making the whole run thus — "Sing the 'Cruiskeen Lawn;' the emperor wishes it."

I had scarcely time to thrust my handkerchief to my mouth, and prevent an outbreak of laughter, when I saw the Cossack officer present the card to Paul with a deep bow. Mr. Rooney read it — surveyed the bearer — read it again — rubbed his eyes — drew over a branch of wax candles to inspect it better; and then directing a look to the opposite extremity of the table, exchanged glances with his spouse, as if interrogating her intentions once more. A quick, sharp nod from Mrs. Paul decided the question thus tacitly asked; and Paul, clearing off a tumbler of sherry, muttered to himself — "What the devil put the 'Cruiskeen Lawn' into his majesty's head I can't think; but I suppose there's no refusing."

A very spirited tapping with the handle of his knife was now heard to mix with the other convivial sounds, and soon indeed to overtop them, as Paul, anxious to fulfil a royal behest, cleared his throat a couple of times, and called out, "I'll do the best I can, your majesty;" and at once struck up —

"Let the farmer praise his grounds,
Let the huntsman praise his hounds,
And talk of the deeds they have done;
But I more blest than they —"

Here Paul quavered, and at last the pent-up mirth of the whole room could endure no more, but burst forth into one continuous shout of laughter, in which kings, dukes, ambassadors, and field-m Marshals joined as loudly as their neighbours. To hear the song was utterly impossible; and though from Mr. Paul's expanded cheeks and violent gesticulation it was evident he was in full chant, nothing could be heard save the scream of laughing which shook the building — an emotion certainly not the less difficult to repress, as Mrs. Paul, shaking her hand at him with passionate energy, called out —

"Oh, the baste! — he thinks he's on circuit this minnit!"

As for myself, half-choking, and with sore sides, I never recovered till I reached the street, when O'Grady dragged me along, saying as he did so —

"We must reach home at once. Nothing but a strong *alibi* will save my character for this in the morning."

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Frescati."

I WAS not sorry when I heard the following morning that my mother would not appear before dinner-hour. I dreaded the chance of any allusion to Miss Bellew's name requiring explanation on my part; and the more so, as I myself was utterly lost in conjectures as to the reason of her singular reception of me.

Julia, too, appeared more out of spirits than usual. She pleaded fatigue; but I could see that something lay heavily on her mind. She conversed with evident effort, and seemed to have a difficulty in recalling her faculties to the ordinary topics of the day. A thought struck me that perhaps De Vere's conduct might have given cause for her depression; and gradually I drew the conversation to the mention of his name, when I soon became undeceived on this point.

She told me with perfect unconcern how my father had tracked out the whole line of his duplicity and calumny regarding me, and had followed the matter up by a representation to the duke at the head of the army, who immediately commanded his retirement from the Guards. Later on, his family influence had obtained his appointment as *attaché* to the embassy at Paris; but since their first rupture he had discontinued his visits, and now had ceased to be acknowledged by them when they met.

My cousin's melancholy not being then attributable to any thing connected with De Vere, I set myself to work to ascertain whence it proceeded; and suddenly the thought struck me that perhaps my mother's surmise might have some foundation, and that Julia, feel-

ing an affection for me, might have been hurt at my evident want of attention towards her since we met.

I have already begged of my reader to separate such suspicions from the coxcombry of the lady-killer, who deems every girl he meets his victim. If I did for a moment imagine that my cousin liked me, I did so with a stronger sense of my own unworthiness to merit her love, than if I myself had sought her affection. I had felt her superiority to myself too early in life, to outlive the memory of it as we grew older. The former feeling of dread which I entertained of Julia's sarcasm still lived within me; and I felt keenly, that she who knew the weaknesses of the boy, was little likely to forget them in reflecting over the failures of the man; and thus, if she did care for me, I well knew that her affection must be chequered by too many doubts and uncertainties to give it that character of abiding love which alone could bring happiness.

I perceived clearly enough that she disliked O'Grady. Was it, then, that being interested for me, she was grieved at my great intimacy with one she herself did not admire, and who evidently treated her with marked coldness and reserve?

Harassed with these suspicions, and annoyed that those I had hoped to see regard each other as friends avoided every opportunity of intimacy, I strolled forth to walk alone, my mind brooding over dark and disagreeable images, and my brain full of plans all based upon disappointed hopes and blighted expectations. To my mother's invitation to dinner for that day O'Grady had returned an apology — he was engaged to his friend M. Guillemain, with whom he was also

to pass the morning; so that I was absolutely without a companion.

When first I issued from the Place Vendôme, I resolved at all hazards to wait on the Rooneys, and at once see Miss Bellew, and seek an explanation, if possible, for her manner towards me. As I hastened on towards the Chaussée, however, I began to reflect on the impropriety of such a course, after the evident refusal she had given to any renewal of acquaintance. "I did know Mr. Hinton," were the words she used — words which, considering all that had passed between us, never could have been spoken lightly or without reason. A hundred vague conjectures as to the different ways in which my character and motives might have been slandered to her occupied me as I sauntered along. De Vere and Burke were both my enemies, and I had little doubt that with them originated the calumny from which I now was suffering; and as I turned over in my thoughts all the former passages of our hatred, I felt how gladly they would embrace the opportunity of wounding me where the injury would prove the keenest.

Without knowing it I had actually reached the street where the Rooneys lived, and was within a few paces of their house. Strange enough, the same scene I had so often smiled at before their house in Dublin was now enacting here: the great difference being, that instead of the lounging subs of marching regiments, the swaggering cornets of dragoons, the over-dressed and under-bred crowds of would-be fashionables who then congregated before the windows or curvetted beneath the balcony — were now the generals of every foreign service, field-m Marshals glittering with orders,

powdered *diplomates*, cordoned political writers, *saavants* from every country in Europe, and idlers whose *bon mots* and smart sayings were the delight of every dinner-table in the capital; — all happy to have some neutral ground where the out-posts of politics might be surveyed without compromise or danger, and where, amid the excellencies of the table and the pleasures of society, intrigues could be fathomed or invented, under the auspices of that excellent attorney's wife, who deemed herself meanwhile the great attraction of her courtly visitors and titled guests.

As I drew near the house I scarcely ventured to look towards the balcony, in which a number of well-dressed persons were now standing chatting together. One voice I soon recognised, and its every accent cut my very heart as I listened. It was Lord Dudley de Vere, talking in his usual tone of loud assumption. I could hear the same vacant laugh which had so often offended me; and I actually dreaded lest some chance allusion to myself might reach me where I stood. There must be something intensely powerful in the influence of the human voice, when its very cadence alone can elevate to rapture or sting to madness. Who has not felt the ecstasy of some one brief word from "lips beloved," after long years of absence? and who has not experienced the tumultuous conflict of angry passions that rise unbidden at the mere sound of speaking from those we like not? My heart burned within me as I thought of her who doubtless was then among that gay throng, and for whose amusement those powers of his lordship's wit were in all likelihood called forth; and I turned away in anger and in sorrow.

As the day wore on I could not face towards home. I felt I dare not meet the searching questions my mother was certain to ask me; nor could I endure the thought of mixing with a crowd of strangers, when my own spirits were hourly sinking. I dined alone at a small *café* in the Palais Royal, and sat moodily over my wine till past eleven o'clock. The stillness of the room startled me at length, and I looked up and found the tables deserted; a sleepy waiter lounged lazily on a bench, and the untrimmed candles and disordered look of every thing indicated that no other guests were then expected.

"Where have they gone to?" said I, curious to know what so suddenly had taken the crowd away.

"To Frescati, Monsieur," said the waiter: "the *salon* is filling fast by this time."

A strange feeling of dislike to being alone, had taken hold on me; and having inquired the way to the Rue Richelieu from the servant, I issued forth.

What a contrast to the dark and gloomy streets of Paris, with their irregular pavement, was the brilliantly lighted vestibule, with its marble pillars and spacious stair rising gracefully beyond it, which met my eyes as I entered Frescati's. Following in the crowd of persons who pressed their way along, I reached a large ante-chamber, where several servants in rich liveries received the hats and canes of the visitors who thronged eagerly forward, their merry voices and gay laughter resounding through the arched roof.

As the wide doors were thrown open noiselessly, I was quite unprepared for the splendour of the scene. Here were not only officers of rank in all the gala of their brilliant uniform, and civilians in full dress shi-

ning in stars and decorations, but ladies also with that perfection of toilette only known to Parisian women, their graceful figures scattered through the groups, or promenading slowly up and down, conversing in a low tone; while servants passed to and fro with champagne and fruit ices on massive silver salvers, their noiseless gesture and quiet demeanour in perfect keeping with the hushed and tranquil look of all around. As I drew closer to the table, I could mark that the stillness was even more remarkable: not a voice was heard but of the croupier of the table, as with ceaseless monotony he repeated — “*Faites le jeu, messieurs! — Le jeu est fait. Noire perd — et couleur gagne. Rouge perd — et le couleur —* ;” the rattle of the rake and the chink of the gold followed, a low muttered “*Sacre!*” being the only sound that mingled with them. But I could mark that, although the etiquette of ruin demanded this unbroken silence, passion worked in every feature there. On one side was an old man, his filmy eyes shaded by his hand from the strong glare of wax lights, peering with eagerness, and tremulous from age and excitement as the cards fell from the banker’s hands, his blanched lips muttering each word after the croupier, and his wasted cheek quivering as the chances inclined against him. Here was a bold and manly face, flushed and heated, whose bloodshot eye ranged quickly over the board, while every now and then some effort to seem calm and smile, would cross the features, and in its working show the dreadful struggle that was maintained within. And then again a beautiful girl, her dark eye dilated almost to a look of wild insanity, her lips parted, her cheek marked with patches of white and red, and her fair hands clenched,

while her bosom heaved and fell as though some pent-up agony was eating within her very heart.

At the end of the table was a vacant chair, beside which an officer in a Prussian uniform was standing, while before him was a small brass-clasped box. Curious to know what this meant, I turned to see to which of those about me I might venture to address a question, when suddenly my curiosity became satisfied without inquiry. A loud voice talking German with a rough accent — the heavy tramp of a cavalry boot, clanking with large spurs, announced the approach of some one, who cared little for the conventional silence of the rooms; and as the crowd opened I saw an old man in blue uniform, covered with stars, elbow his way towards the chair; his eyebrows of shaggy gray almost concealed his eyes as effectually as his heavy moustache did his mouth. He walked lame, and leaned on a stick, which, as he took his place in the chair, he placed unceremoniously on the table before him. The box, which was opened the moment he sat down, he now drew towards him, and, plunging his hand into it, drew forth a handful of "Napoleons," which, without waiting to count, he threw on the table, uttering, in a thick, guttural voice, the one word "*rouge*." The impassive coldness of the croupier, as he pronounced his habitual exordium, seemed to move the old man's impatience, as he rattled his fingers hurriedly among the gold, and muttered some broken words of German between his teeth. The enormous sum he betted drew every eye towards his part of the table, of all which he seemed totally regardless, as he raked in his winnings, or frowned with a heavy lowering look as often as fortune turned against him. Marshal Blucher — for it was he

— was an impassioned gambler, and needed not the excitement of the champagne, which he drank eagerly from time to time, to stimulate his passion for play.

As I turned from the *rouge et noir* table, I remarked that every now and then some person left the room by a small door, which, concealed by a mirror, had escaped my attention when I entered. On inquiry, I found that this passage led to a secret part of the establishment, which only a certain set of players frequented, and where the tables were kept open during the entire day and night. Curious to see the interior of this den of greater iniquity, I presented myself at it, and on opening found myself in a narrow corridor, where a servant demanded my billet. Having informed him that I was merely there from motives of curiosity, I offered him a Napoleon, which speedily satisfied his scruples. He conducted me to the end of the gallery, where, touching a spring, the door opened, and I found myself in a room considerably smaller than the *salon*, and, with the exception of being less brilliantly lighted, equally splendid in its decorations. Around on all sides were small partitions, like the cells in a London coffee-house, where tables were provided for parties to sup at. These were now unoccupied, the greater attraction of high play having drawn every one around the table, where the same monotonous sounds of the croupier's voice, the same patter of the cards, and the same clinking of the gold, continued unceasingly. The silence of the *salon* was as nothing to the stillness that reigned here. Not a voice save the banker's was ever heard — each better placed his money on the red or black square of the table without speaking — and the massive rouleaus were passed backwards and forwards with no

other sound save the noise of the rake. I remarked, too, that the stakes seemed far heavier; crumpled rolls of *billets de banque* were often thrown down; and, from the muffled murmur of the banker, I could hear such sums as "seven thousand," "ten thousand francs," called out.

It was some time before I could approach near enough to see the play; at last I edged my way to the front, and obtained a place behind the croupier's chair, where a good view of the table was presented to me. The different nations, with their different costumes, tongues, and expressions, so strangely congregated, were a study that might have amused me for a long time, had not a chance word of English spoken close by me drawn off my attention. Immediately in front, but with their backs toward me, sat two persons, who seemed, as was often the habit, to play in concert. A large heap of gold and notes lay before them, and several cards, marked with pin holes to chronicle the run of the game, were scattered about. Unable to see their faces, I was struck by one singular but decisive mark of their difference in condition and rank: — the hands of one were fair and delicate almost as a woman's — the blue veins circled clearly through them, and rings of great price and brilliancy glittered on the fingers; those of the other were coarse, brown-stained, and ill cared for; the sinewy fingers and strong bony knuckles denoting one accustomed to laborious exertions. It was strange that two persons, evidently so wide apart in their walks in life, should be thus associated; and feeling a greater interest, from the chance phrase of English one of them had dropped, I watched them closely. By degrees I could mark that their difference

in dress was no less conspicuous; for although the more humble was well, even fashionably attired, he had not the same distinctive marks which characterized his companion as a person of class and condition. While I looked, the pile of gold before them had gradually melted down to some few pieces; and as they bent down their heads over the cards, and concerted as to their play, it was clear that by their less frequent ventures they were becoming more cautious.

"No, no," said he who seemed the superior, "I'll not risk it."

"I say yes, yes," muttered the other, in a deeper voice; "the *rouge* can't go on for ever: it has passed eleven times."

"I know," said the former bitterly; "and I have lost seventeen thousand francs."

"*You* have lost!" retorted the other savagely, but in the same low tone; "why not *we*? Am *I* for nothing in all this?"

"Come, come, Ulick, don't be in a passion."

The name and the tone of the speaker startled me; I leaned forward; my very head reeled as I looked. It was Lord Dudley de Vere and Ulick Burke. The rush of passionate excitement that ran through me for a minute or two, to be thus thrown beside the two only enemies I had ever had, unnerved me so far that I could not collect myself. To call them forth at once, and charge them with their baseness towards me was my first rapid thought; to dare them openly, and denounce them before that crowded assembly; but from this wild thrill of anger I was soon turned, as Burke's voice, elevated to a tone of passion, called out —

"Hold! I am going to bet!"

The banker stopped — the cards still rested in his hands.

“I say, Sir, I will do it,” said Burke, turning to De Vere, whose cheek was now pale as death, and whose disordered and haggard air was increased by his having torn off his cravat and opened the collar of his shirt. “I say I will — do *you* gainsay me?” continued he, laying on the words an accent of such contemptuous insolence that even De Vere’s eye fired at it. “*Vingt mille francs, noir,*” said Burke, placing his last *billet* on the table; and the words were scarce spoken, when the banker cried out —

“*Noir perd et passe.*”

A horrible curse broke from Burke as he fixed his staring eyeballs on the outspread cards, and counted over the numbers to himself.

“You see, Burke,” said De Vere.

“Don’t speak to me, now d—n you,” said the other with clenched teeth.

De Vere pushed back his chair, and rising, moved through the crowd towards an open window. Burke sat with his head buried between his hands for some seconds, and then starting up at the banker’s call, cried out — “*Dix mille, noir!*”

A kind of half suppressed laugh ran round the table, at seeing that he had no funds, while he still offered to bet. He threw his eyes upon the board; and then as quickly turned them on the players. One by one his dark look was bent on them, as if to search out some victim for his hate; but all were hushed. Many as reckless as himself were there — many as utterly ruined — but not one so lost to hope.

"Who laughed?" said he in French, while the thick veins of his forehead stood out like cordage; and then, as none answered to his challenge, he rose slowly, still scowling with the malignity of a demon.

"May I have your seat, Monsieur?" said a dapper little Frenchman, with a smile and a bow, as Burke moved away.

"Yes, take it," said he, as lifting the strong chair with one hand he dashed it upon the floor, smashing it to pieces with a crash that shook the room.

The crowd which made way for him to pass out, as speedily closed again around the table, where the work of ruin still went forward; not a passing glance was turned from the board to look after the beggared gambler.

The horrible indifference the players had shown to the sufferings of this wretched man so thoroughly disgusted me, that I could no longer bear even to look on the game; the passion of play had shown itself to me now in all its most repulsive form, and I turned with abhorrence from the table.

My mind agitated by a number of emotions, and my heart now swelling with triumphant vengeance, now filled with pity for the sake of him who had ruined my fortunes for ever, I sat in one of the small boxes I have mentioned; which, dimly lighted, had not yet been sought by any of the players to sup in. A closely drawn curtain separated the little place I occupied from the adjoining one, where from time to time I heard the clink of glasses, and the noise of champagne corks. At first I supposed that some other solitary individual had established himself there to enjoy his winnings, or brood over his losses; when at last I could hear the

low muttering of voices, which ere long I recognised as belonging to Burke and De Vere.

Burke, who evidently from his tone and manner possessed the mastery over his companion, no longer employed the insulting accents I had witnessed at the table; on the contrary, he condescended to flatter — affected to be delighted with De Vere's wit and sharpness; and more than once insinuated, that with such an associate he cared little what tricks fortune played them; or to use his own phrase, "they were sure to come round."

De Vere's voice, which I could only hear at rare intervals, told that he had drank deeply; and that between wine and his losses, a kind of reckless desperation had seized him, which gave to his manner and words a semblance of boldness which his real character lacked completely.

When I knew that Burke and De Vere were the persons near me, I rose to leave the spot. The fear of playing the eaves-dropper forbade my remaining; but as I stood up, the mention of my own name uttered in a tone of vengeance by Burke, startled me, and I listened.

"Yes," said he, striking his hand upon the table, and confirming his assertion with a horrible oath. "Yes; for him and through him my uncle left me a beggar. But already I have had my revenge; though it sha'n't end there."

"You don't mean to have him out again: confound him he's a devilish good shot — winged you already. Eh?"

Burke, unmindful of the interruption, continued —

"It was I that told my uncle how this fellow was the nephew of the man that seduced his own wife. I worked upon the old man so, that he left house and home, and wandered through the country till mental irritation, acting on a broken frame, became fever, and then death."

"Died — eh? glorious nephew you are, by Jove. What next?"

"I'll tell you: I forged a letter in his hand-writing to Louisa, written as if on his death-bed, commanding as his last prayer that she should never see Hinton again; or if by any accident they should meet, that she should not recognise him nor know him."

"Devilish clever, that: egad, a better martingale than that you invented a while ago. I say, pass the wine — red fourteen times — wasn't it fourteen? — and if it had not been for your cursed obstinacy I'd have backed the red. See, fifty Naps. — one hundred — four — eight — sixteen — thirty-four — or six — which is it? — oh, confounded stupidity!"

"Come, come, Dudley, better luck another time. Louisa's eyes must have been too kindly bent on you, or you'd have been more fortunate."

"Eh? you think she likes me? — capital champagne that — I always thought she did from the first. That's what I call walking inside of Hinton. How he'll look — ha! ha! ha!"

"Yes, how he'll look," echoed Burke, endeavouring to join the laugh. "But now one thing is yet wanting."

"You mean those dispatches," replied De Vere, suddenly; "you always come back to that. Well, once for all, I say, no!"

"Just hear me, Dudley: nothing is easier — nothing incurs less risk."

"Less risk! what do you mean? No risk for me to steal the papers of the embassy, and give them to you to hand over to that scoundrel at the head of the secret police: devilish green I may be, but not so green as that, Master Burke."

"Guillemain will give us forty thousand francs. Forty thousand! with half that and your luck, De Vere, we'll break every banque in Paris. I know you don't wish to marry Louisa."

"No; hang it, that's always the wind up. Keep that for the last throw — eh! There's heavy play there — see how silent they are."

"Ay; and with forty thousand francs we might join them," said Burke, as if musing; "and so safely it may be done."

"I say no!" replied De Vere resolutely.

"What do you fear? is it me?"

"No, not you; I believe you are true enough — your own neck will be in the rope too; so you'll say nothing; but I won't do it — pass the champagne — there's something so devilish blackguard in stealing a man's papers."

Burke started, as if the tones of his companion's voice had stung him like an adder.

"Have you thought over your present condition?" said Burke firmly; "you have not a guinea left — your debts in Paris alone, to my knowledge, are above forty thousand francs."

"I'll never pay a livre of them — damned swindlers and Jew money-lenders," was the cool reply.

"Might not some scrupulous moralist hint there was something blackguard in that?" said Burke, with slow and distinct articulation.

"What!" replied De Vere; "do you come here to tutor me — a low-bred horse-jockey — a spy? take off your hands, Sir, or I'll alarm the room; let loose my collar."

"Come, come, my lord, we're both in fault," said Burke, smothering his passion with a terrible effort: "we, of all men, must not quarrel. Play is to us the air we breathe, the light we live in. Give me your hand."

"Allow me to draw on my glove first," said De Vere, in a tone of incomparable insolence.

"Champagne here," said Burke to the waiter, as he passed, and for some minutes neither spoke.

The clock chimed a quarter to two, and Burke started to his feet.

"I must be going," said he, hastily; "I should have been at the Porte St. Martin by half-past one."

"Salute the Jacobite Club, *de ma part*," said De Vere with an insulting laugh, "and tell them to cut every body's throat in Paris, save old Lafitte's; he has promised to do a bill for me in the morning."

"You'll not need his kindness so soon," replied Burke, "if you are willing to take my advice — forty thousand francs —."

"Would he make it sixty, think you?"

"Sixty!" said Burke with animation; "I'm not sure, but shall I say for sixty you'll do it?"

"No, I don't mean that; I was only anxious to know if these confounded rigmaroles I have to copy sometimes, could possibly interest any one to that amount."

Burke tried to laugh, but the hollow chuckle sounded like the gulping of a smothering man.

"Laugh out," said De Vere, whose voice became more and more indistinct, as his courage became stronger; "that muttering is so devilish like a spy — a rascally, low-bred —."

A heavy blow — a half-uttered cry followed, and De Vere fell with a crash to the floor, his face and temples bathed with blood; while Burke, springing to the door, darted down stairs, and gained the street before pursuit was thought of. A few of the less interested about the table, assisted me to raise the fallen man, from whose nose and mouth the blood flowed in torrents. He was perfectly senseless, and evinced scarcely a sign of life, as we carried him down stairs, and placed him in a carriage.

"Where to?" said the coachman, as I stood beside the door.

I hesitated for a second, and then said, "No. 4, Place Vendôme."

CHAPTER XXXII.

Disclosures.

I HAVE more than once heard physicians remark the singular immunity a fool's skull seems to possess from the evil effects of injury, as if nature, when denying a governing faculty, had, in kind compensation, imparted a triple thickness to the head thus exposed. It is well known how among the educated and thinking classes, many maladies are fatal, which are comparatively innocuous among those whose hands alone are called on to labour. A very ingenious theory might be spun from this fact, to the manifest self-gratulation of fox-hunters, sailors, gentlemen who assault the new police, tithe proctors, and others; for the present I have no further use for the remark, than as it bore upon the head-piece of Lord Dudley de Vere, whose admirable developments had received little or no damage from the rude assault of his companion. When he awoke the next morning, he was only aware that something unusual had occurred; and gradually by "trying back" in his sensations, he remembered every particle that took place — had the clearest recollection of the "run upon red" — knew the number of bottles of champagne he had partaken of, and was only puzzled by one thing — what could possibly have suggested the courage with which he confronted Burke, and the hardihood that led him to insult him.

As to any awkwardness at being brought home to the house of the person he had himself so ill-treated,

he never felt any thing approaching to it; the extent of his reasoning on this point only went to his satisfaction, that "some one" took care of him, and that he was not left to lie on the floor of the "salon."

This admirable philosophy of his served in a great measure to relieve me from the constraint I felt in presenting myself before him, and soon put me perfectly at my ease in our interview. After learning that, except some head-aching sensations, the only inconvenience he experienced was an unconquerable thirst, I touched slightly on the cause of his misfortune, when, what was my astonishment to discern that he not only did not entertain a particle of ill-will towards the man who had so brutally ill-treated him, but actually grew warm in his panegyric of Burke's consummate skill and address at play — such qualities in his estimation being well worthy to cover any small blemishes of villainy his character might suffer under.

"I say, don't you think Burke a devilish sharp fellow? he's up to everything, and so cool — so confoundedly cool; not last night though: no, by Jove! he lost temper completely. I shall be marked with that knock, eh? Damn me, it was too bad; he must apologise for it. You know he was drunk, and somehow he was all wrong the whole evening; he wouldn't let me back the "rouge," and such a run — you saw that, I suppose."

I assented with a nod, for I still hesitated how far I should communicate to him my knowledge of Burke's villainy towards myself.

“By-the-bye, it’s rather awkward my being here; you know your people have cut me: don’t you think I might get a cab to bring me over to the Rue D’Alger?”

There was something which touched me in the simplicity of this remark, and I proceeded to assure him that any former impressions of my friends would not be remembered against him at that moment.

“Oh! that I’m sure of. No one ever thinks it worth while to bear malice against a poor devil like me; but if I’d have backed the red —”

“Colonel O’Grady is in the drawing-room,” said a servant in a low voice to me at this instant; and leaving Lord Dudley to speculate on the contingencies of his having “backed the red,” I joined my friend, whom I had not seen on the previous day.

We were alone, and in ten minutes I explained to him the entire discovery I had fallen upon, concealing only my affection for Louisa Bellew, which I could not bring myself even to allude to.

“I see,” said Phil, when I concluded — “I see you are half disposed to forgive De Vere all his rascality. Now, what a different estimate we take of men; perhaps — I can’t say — it is because I’m an Irishman — but I lean to the bold-faced villain Burke: the miserable, contemptible weakness of the one is far more intolerable to me than the ruffian effrontery of the other. Don’t forget the lesson I gave you many a year ago: a fool is always a blackguard. Now, if that fellow could see his companion this minute, there is not a circumstance he has noticed here that he would not retail, if it bore

to your disadvantage. Untouched by your kindness to him, he would sell you, ay, to the very man you saved him from. But, after all, what have we to do with him? Our first point is to rescue this poor girl's name from being ever mixed with his; any thing further is, of course, out of the question. The Rooneys are going back — I saw Paul this morning — 'the Cruiskeen Lawn' has been their ruin — all the Irish officers who had taken Madame de Roni for an illustrious stranger have found out the true scent; and so many distinguished persons are involved in the ridicule of their parties, that the old *chef de police*, my friend, has sent them a private order to leave Paris in a week. Paul is in raptures at it — he has spent eighteen thousand in two months — detests the place — is dying to be back in Dublin — and swears that except one Cossack officer he hasn't met a pleasant fellow since he came abroad."

"And Mrs. Paul?"

"Oh! the old story. I put Guillemain up to it, and he has hinted that the Empress of Russia has heard of the Czar's attentions — that there's the devil to pay in St. Petersburg — and that if she doesn't manage to steal out of Paris slyly, some confounded boyard or other will slip a sack over her head and carry her off to Tobolsk. Elizabeth and the Exiles has formed part of her reading, and Madame de Roni will dream every night of the knout till she reaches her dear native land. But now to business. I, too, have made my discoveries since we met. De Vere's high play has been a matter of surprise to all who know

him. I have found out his secret — he plays with forged *billets de banque*."

"And has the wretched fellow gone so far as this?"

"He doesn't know it — he believes that the money is the proceeds of bills he has given to Burke, who affects to get them discounted. See here — here are a handful of their notes — Guillemain knows all, and retains the secret as a hold over Burke, whose honesty to himself he already suspects. If he catch him tripping —"

"Then —"

"Why, then, the galleys for life. Such is the system — a villain with them is worthless if his life isn't at their disposal — Satan's bond completely — all, all, But show me De Vere's room, and leave me alone with him for half an hour. Let us then meet at my hotel, and concert future measures."

Having left O'Grady with De Vere, I walked out upon the boulevards, my head full of the extraordinary facts so suddenly thronging one upon the other. A dash of hope, that for many a day had not visited me, was now mingled through all my meditations, and I began to think that there was yet a chance of happiness for me.

I had not gone many paces when an arm was thrust into mine, and a hearty chuckling laugh at the surprise rang in my ear. I turned — it was Mr. Paul Rooney, taking his morning's promenade of Paris, and now on his way home with an enormous bouquet for madame, which she had taught him to pre-

sent to her each day on her appearing in the drawing-room.

"Ah! captain, the very man I wanted. We haven't had a moment to ourselves since your arrival. You must come and take a bit of dinner with us to-day — thank heaven we've no company. I have a leg of pork, smuggled into the house as if it was a bale of goods from Alexandria. Nobody knows of it but myself and Tim."

"Tim! why, have you brought Tim to Paris?"

"Hush!" said he in a low cautious voice; "I'd be ruined entirely if madame was to find him out. Tim is dressed like a Tartar, and stands in the hall; and Mrs. Rooney believes that he never heard of a civil bill in his life. But here we are."

So saying, he opened a small wicket with a latch key, and led me into a large and well-trimmed garden, across which we walked at a rapid pace; Paul speculating from the closed shutters of his wife's room that he needed not have hurried home so fast.

"She's not down yet — one o'clock as I'm a sinner. Come along and sit down in the library; I'll join you presently."

Scarcely had Paul left the room when I began to think over the awkwardness of my position should I meet Miss Bellew; what course to follow under the circumstances I knew not; when just at the moment the door opened, and she entered. Not perceiving me, as I stood in a deep window recess, she drew a chair to the fire and sat down. I hardly ventured to breathe — I felt like one who had no right to obtrude himself

there, and had become, as it were, a spy upon her. A long drawn breath burst from me; she started up; I moved slightly forward, and stood before her. She leaned her hand upon the arm of the chair for support, her cheek grew deadly pale; and a tremulous quiver shook her lip.

“Mr. Hinton,” she began; and then as if the very sound of her voice had terrified her, she paused. “Mr. Hinton,” resumed she, “I am sure — nay, I know — if you were aware of the reasons of my conduct towards you, you would not only acquit me of all blame, but spare me the pain of our ever meeting.”

“I know them — I do know them,” said I passionately; “I have been slandered.”

“No, you do not, cannot know what I mean,” interrupted she. “It is a secret between my own heart and one who is now no more.”

The last words fell from her one by one, while a single tear rolled from her eyelid, and trickled along her cheek.

“Yes, yes, Louisa, I do know it — I know all: a chance has told me how your dear father’s name has been used to banish me for ever from your sight — how a forgery of his hand-writing —”

“What! who could have told you what my father’s last note contained?”

“He who wrote it confessed it in my hearing — Ulick Burke: nay, I can even repeat the words —.” But as I spoke, a violent trembling seized her, her lips became bloodless, she tottered, and sank upon the chair. I had only time to spring forward and catch

her in my arms, and her head fell heavily back, and dropped on my shoulder.

I cannot, if I would, repeat the words which, in all the warm eloquence of affection I spoke. I could mark by her heightened colour that the life's blood again coursed freely in her veins; and could see that she heard me. I told her how through every hardship and suffering, in all the sorrow of disappointed ambition, in the long hours of captivity, my heart had ever turned to her: and then, when we did meet, to see her changed!

"But you do not blame — you cannot blame me, if I believed —"

"No, if you tell me now that but for this falsehood you have not altered — that your heart is still as much my own as I once thought it."

A faint smile played on her lips as her eyes were turned upon me; while her voice muttered —

"And do you still love me?"

I pressed her hand to my lips in rapture, when suddenly the door opened, and Paul Rooney rushed in.

"Another candidate for the leg of —. Eh? what's this?" said he, as I rose and advanced to meet him. While Louisa, blushing deeply, buried her head in her hand; and then starting up, left the room.

"Captain, captain," said Paul gravely, "what does this mean? Do you suppose that because there is some difference in our rank in life, that you are privileged to insult one who is under my protection? Is it because you are the guardsman, and I the attorney

that you have dared to take a liberty here, which in your own walk you couldn't venture on?"

"My dear Mr. Rooney, you mistake me sadly."

"If I do not mistake you I'll put a hole in your body as sure as my name's Paul," was the quick reply.

"You do, then, and wrong me to boot. I have been long and ardently attached to Miss Bellew. From the hour I met her at your house, I loved her. It is the first time we have met since our long separation, I determined it should not be lost. I've asked her to be my wife."

"You have! And what does she say?"

"She has consented."

"Rum-ti-iddity, iddity," said Paul, snapping his fingers, and capering about the room like a man deranged. "Give me your hand, my buck. I'd rather draw the settlements, so help me, than I'd see the warrant to make me master of the rolls. Who'd say there isn't luck in a leg of pork? She's a darling girl; and beautiful as she is, her looks isn't the best of her — an angel as sure as I'm here. And look here," — here he dropped his voice, — "seven thousand a year, that may be made nine. Hennessy's farm is out of lease in October; and the Cluangoff estate is let at ten shillings an acre. Hurroo! maybe I won't be drunk to-night; and bad luck to the Cos-sack, Tartar, Bohemian, or any other blackguard, I'll let in to the house this day or night. Sworn, my lord."

After some little discussion, it was arranged that if Louisa would give her consent to the arrangement, the

marriage should take place before the Rooneys left Paris. Meanwhile, Paul agreed with me in keeping the whole matter a perfect secret from every body, Mrs. Rooney herself included. Our arrangements were scarcely concluded when O'Grady appeared. Having waited for me some time at his hotel, he had set out in search of me.

"I'm your man to-day, Paul," said he. "You got my note, I suppose?"

"All right," said Mr. Rooney, whose double secret of the marriage and the leg of pork seemed almost too much for him to bear.

"I suppose I may tell Phil," said I in a whisper.

"No one else," said Paul as we left the house, and I took O'Grady's arm down the street.

"Well, I have frightened De Vere to some purpose," said O'Grady. "He has made a full confession about Burke, who was even a deeper villain than we supposed. What do you think, he has been the spy of the Buonapartist faction all this time, and selling old Guillemain as regularly as the others. To indulge his passion for play, he received the pay of four different parties, whom he pitted against each other exactly as he saw proper. Consummate clever scoundrel! he had to deal with men whose whole lives are passed in the very practice of every chicanery and deceit, and yet he has jockeyed them all. What a sad thing to think that abilities and knowledge of mankind should be prostituted to the lowest and most debasing uses; and that the sole tendency of talent should be to dishonour and disgrace its possessor! Some of

his manufactured despatches were masterpieces of cleverness."

"Well, where is he now? Still in Paris?"

"No. The moment he had so far forgotten himself as to strike De Vere, he forged a passport, and returned to London, carrying with him hosts of papers of the French authorities, which to our foreign-office will be very acceptable. De Vere meanwhile feels quite at his ease. He was always afraid of his companion, yet can't forgive him his last indignity."

"No! A blow!"

"Not at all; you mistake — his regrets have a different origin. It is for not backing the 'rouge' that he is inexorable towards him. Besides he is under the impression that all these confessions he has been making, establish for him a kind of moral insolvency act, by which he is to come forth irresponsible for the past, and quite ready to contract new debts for the future. At this moment his greatest point of doubt consists in whether he should marry your cousin Lady Julia or Miss Bellew; for, in his own phrase, 'he must do something that way to come round.'"

"Impudent scoundrel!"

"Fact, I assure you; and so easy, so unaffected, so free from embarrassment of any kind is he, that I am really quite a convert to this modern school of good manners, when associating with even such as Burke conveys no feeling of shame or discomfort. More than could be said some forty years ago, I fancy."

It was the hour of my mother's morning reception, and we found the drawing-room crowded with loungers

and fashionable idlers, discussing the news of the day, and above all the *Roni fête* — the extraordinary finale to which gave rise to a hundred conjectures: some asserting that Monsieur de Roni's song was a violent pasquinade against the Emperor Alexander. Others, equally well informed, alleging it was the concerted signal for a general massacre of the allies, which was to have begun at the same moment in the Rue Montmartre. "She is a Buonapartist — a Legitimiste — a Neapolitane — an Anversoise," contended one after another; my only fear being, that some one would enlighten the party by saying she was the wife of an Irish attorney. All agreed, however, she was "*bien mauvais ton*;" that her *fête* was, with all its magnificence, any thing but select; her supper superb, but too crowded by half; and, in fact, that Madame Roni had enjoyed the pleasure of ruining herself to very little other purpose than that of being generally ridiculed and laughed at.

"And this niece, or ward, or whatever it is — who can tell any thing of her?" said my mother.

"*Ah, pardieu!* she's very handsome," said Grammont, with a malicious smile.

"Perfect," said another, "quite perfect; but a little — a very little too graceful. Don't you think so?"

"Why, what do you mean?" said Lady Charlotte, as her eyes sparkled with animation at the thought of a secret.

"Nothing," replied the last speaker, carelessly; "except that one always detects the '*danseuse*:' she was thinner when I saw her at Naples."

I whispered one word — but one — in his ear, and his face became purple with shame and confusion.

“Eh, what is it?” said my mother eagerly. “John knows something of her too. John, dearest, let us hear it?”

“I am in your ladyship’s debt as regards one secret,” said O’Grady, interrupting, “perhaps I may be permitted to pay it on this occasion. The lady in question is the daughter of an Irish baronet, the descendant of a family as old as any of those who now hear me. That baronet would have been a peer of the realm, had he consented to vote once — but once — with the minister, on a question where his conscience told him to oppose him; his refusal was repaid by neglect — others were promoted to rank and honours before him; but the frown of a minister could neither take away the esteem of his country, nor his own self-respect. He is now dead; but his daughter is the worthy inheritor of his virtues and his name — perhaps I might interest the present company as much in her favour by adding, she possesses something like eight thousand per annum.”

“Two hundred thousand *livres de rente!*” said Grammont, smacking his lips with astonishment, and perfectly insensible to the tone of mockery in which O’Grady’s last words were spoken.

“And you are sure of all this?” said my mother.

O’Grady bowed deeply, but without speaking, while his features assumed an expression of severe determination I had never witnessed before. I could

not help remarking, that amid the dismay such an announcement created amid that gossiping and calumnious assembly, my cousin Julia's eyes shone with an added lustre, and her whole face beamed with a look of proud and exalted beauty.

This was now the time to tell O'Grady my secret: and drawing him towards a window, I said —

“Phil, I can wait no longer — you must hear it. I'm going to be married.”

The words had not left my lips, when O'Grady started back, his face pale like a corpse, and his whole frame trembling with eagerness. By a violent effort, however, he rallied; and as he clutched my arm with his fingers, he said —

“I must be going! these good people have made me forget an appointment. Make my respectful homage to her ladyship — and the bride. I shall see you before I leave.”

“Leave! Why, where are you thinking of going?”

“To India.”

“To India!” said Julia, starting round as he spoke.

“To India!” said I in amazement.

He nodded, and, turning quickly round, left the room.

I hastened after him with all my speed, and dashing down stairs, was making for the *porte cochère*, when a shadow beside the door-way caught my eye. I stopped. It was O'Grady: he was leaning against the wall, his head buried in his hands. A horrible doubt

shot through my heart — I dared not dwell upon it, but rushing towards him, I called him by his name. He turned quickly round, while a fierce wild look glistened in his eyes —

“Not now, Hinton — not now!” said he, motioning me away with his hand; and then, as a cold shudder passed over him, he drew his hand across his face, and added in a lower tone — “I never thought to have betrayed myself thus. Good-by, my dear fellow, good-by! It were better we shouldn’t meet again.”

“My dearest, best friend! I never dreamed that the brightest hour of my life was to throw this gloom over your heart.”

“Yes, Jack,” said he, in a voice low and broken, “from the first hour I saw her I loved her. The cold manner she maintained towards me at your father’s house —”

“In my father’s house! What do you mean?”

“When in London, I speak of — when I joined first. Your cousin —”

“My cousin!”

“Yes, Lady Julia. Are you so impatient to call her wife, that you will not remember her as cousin?”

“Call her wife! My dear boy, you’re raving. It’s Louisa Bellew.”

“What! Is it Miss Bellew you are to marry?”

“To be sure —”

But I could not finish the sentence; as he fell upon my shoulder, and his strong frame was convulsed with

emotion. In an instant, however, I tore myself away; and calling out, "Wait for me, O'Grady!" rushed upstairs. I peeped hastily into the drawing-room, and then hurrying along a corridor, opened a door at the end. The blinds of the windows were down, and the room so dark that I could scarcely perceive if any one were there, had not my steps been guided by a low sob which I heard issue from the end of the sofa.

"Julia," said I, rushing forward — "Julia, my dearest cousin! this is no time to deceive ourselves: he loves you — loved you from the first hour he met you. Let me have but one word. Can he — dare he hope that you are not indifferent to him? Let him but see you — but speak to you. Believe me, you have bent a heart as proud and haughty as your own; and you will have broken it if you refuse him. There, dearest girl! — Thanks — my heart's thanks for that!"

The slightest pressure of her taper fingers sent a thrill through me, as I sprang up and dashed down the stairs. In an instant I had seized O'Grady's arm, and the next moment whispered in his ear —

"You've won her!"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

New arrivals.

MR. PAUL ROONEY'S secret was destined to be inviolable, as regarded his leg of pork; for Madame de Roni, either from chagrin or fatigue, did not leave her room the entire day; Miss Bellew declined joining us; and we sat down, a party of three, each wrapped up in his own happiness in a degree far too great to render us either social or conversational. It is true, the wine circulated briskly, we nodded pleasantly now and then to each other; but all our efforts to talk led to so many blunders and cross answers, that we scarcely ventured on more than a chance phrase, or a good-humoured smile. There were certainly several barriers in the way of our complete happiness, in the innumerable prejudices of my lady mother, who would be equally averse to O'Grady's project as to my own; but now was not the time to speculate on these; and we wrapped ourselves up in the glorious anticipation of our success, and cared little for such sources of opposition as might now arise. Meanwhile, Paul entered into a long and doubtless very accurate statement of the Bellew property, to which, I confess, I paid little attention, save when the name of Louisa occurred, which momentarily aroused me from my dreaminess. All the wily stratagems by which he had gained his points with Galway juries — all the cunning devices by which he had circumvented opposing lawyers, and obtained verdicts in almost hopeless cases, however I might have relished

another time, I only now listened to without interest, or heard without understanding.

Towards ten o'clock I received more than one hint from O'Grady that we had promised to take tea at the Place Vendôme; while I myself was manœuvring to find out, if we were to adjourn for coffee, what prospect there might be of seeing Louisa Bellew in the drawing-room.

It was in that dusky twilight we sat, which somehow seems so suited to the quiet enjoyment of one's claret with a small and chosen party; where intimacy prevails sufficiently to make conversation more a thing of choice than necessity; where each man can follow out his own path in thought, and only let his neighbour have a peep here and there into his dreamings, where some vista opens, or some bold prospect stretches away: next to the blazing fire of a winter's hearth, this is the pleasantest thing I know of. Thus was it — when the door opened, and a dusky outline of a figure appeared at the entrance.

"Is Master Phil here?" said a cranky voice there was no mistaking as Mr. Delany's.

"Yes, Corny. What's wrong? — any thing new?"

"Where's the captain?" said he in the same tone.

"I'm here, Corny," said I.

"Well; there's them looking for you without," said he, "that'll maybe surprise you, pleasant as ye are now."

A detestable effort at a laugh here brought on a fit of coughing that lasted a couple of minutes.

"Who is it?" said I. "Where are they?"

A significant gesture with his thumb over his shoulder was the only reply to my question, while he barked out — “Don’t you see me coughing the inside out o’ me?”

I started up, and — without attending to Paul’s suggestion to bring my friends in, or O’Grady’s advice to be cautious if it were Burke — hurried outside, where a servant of the house was in waiting to conduct me.

“Two gentlemen in the drawing-room, Sir,” said he, as he preceded me down the corridor.

The next instant the door opened, and I saw my father, accompanied by another person, who, being wrapped up in travelling equipment, I could not recognise.

“My dear father!” said I, rushing towards him; when suddenly I stopped short, as I perceived that, instead of the affectionate welcome I looked for, he had crossed his hands behind his back, and fixed on me a look of stern displeasure.

“What does this mean?” said I, in amazement; “it was not thus I expected —”

“It was not thus I hoped to have received my son,” said he resolutely, “after a long and eventful separation. But this is too painful to endure longer. Answer me, and with the same truth I have always found in you — Is there a young lady in this house called Miss Bellew?”

“Yes, Sir,” said I, as a cold perspiration broke over me, and I could scarcely support myself.

“Did you make her acquaintance in Ireland?”

"Yes, Sir."

"Did you, at that time, use every effort to win her affections, and give her to understand that she had yours?"

"Yes, Sir," said I, more faintly than before; for already some horrible doubt was creeping on my mind.

"And have you now, Sir," continued he, in a voice elevated to a higher pitch — "have you now, Sir, when a prospect of a richer alliance presents itself, dishonoured yourself and my name, by deserting the girl whose affections you have so gained?"

"No, Sir — that is untrue."

"Stop, young man! I have one at hand this moment who may compel you to retract your words as shamefully as you have boldly said them. Do you know this gentleman?"

"Father Loftus!" said I, starting back in astonishment, as the good priest unfolded a huge comforter from his throat, and stood forth.

"Yes, indeed — no other," said he, in a voice of great sadness; "and sorry I am to see you this way."

"You, surely, my dear friend," said I — "you cannot believe thus harshly of me?"

"If it wasn't for your handwriting, I'd not have believed the pope of Rome," was his reply, as he wiped his eyes. "But there it is."

So saying, he handed to me, with trembling fingers, a letter, bearing the Paris post-mark.

I tore it open, and found it was written in my own name, and addressed to Father Loftus, informing him of my deep regret that, having discovered the unhappy circumstance of her mother's conduct, I was obliged to relinquish all thoughts of an alliance with Miss Bellew's family, whose connection with my own had been so productive of heavy misfortune. This also contained an open note, to be handed by the priest, to Miss Bellew, in which I was made formally to renounce her hand, for reasons in the possession of Father Loftus.

In a second the truth flashed across me, from whom this plot proceeded; and scarcely permitting myself time to read the letter through, I called out —

“This is a forgery! I never wrote it — never saw it before.”

“What!” said my father, starting round, and fixing his eye on the priest.

“You never wrote it?” echoed Father Tom. “Do you say so? Is that your word as a gentleman?”

“It is,” said I firmly. “This day — this very day, I have asked Miss Bellew to be my wife, and she has consented.”

Before my father could seize my hand, the good priest had thrown his arms round my neck, and given me an embrace a bear might have envied. The scene that followed I cannot describe. My poor father, quite overpowered, sat down upon a chair, holding my hand within both his; while Father Tom bustled about the room, looking into all the glass and china ornaments for something to drink, as his mouth, he said, was like

a lime-burner's hat. The honest fellow, it appeared, on receiving the letters signed with my name, left his home the same night, and travelled with all speed to London, where he found my father just on the eve of leaving for Paris. Very little persuasion was necessary to induce him to continue his journey further. On their arrival at Paris, they had gone to O'Grady's hotel, where securing Corny's services, they lost not a moment in tracking me out in the manner I have mentioned.

O'Grady's surprise was little inferior to my own, as I introduced General Hinton and Father Loftus; but as to Mr. Rooney, he actually believed the whole to be a dream, and even when candles were brought, and he had taken a patient survey of the priest, he was far from crediting that my parent was not performed by deputy, till my father's tact and manner convinced him of his mistake.

While the priest was recounting some circumstances of his journey, I took occasion to tell my father of O'Grady's intentions regarding Julia, which with all the warmth of his nature he at once responded to; and touching his glass gaily with Phil's, merely added — "with my best wishes." Poor O'Grady caught up the meaning at once, and grasped his hand with enthusiasm, while the tears started to his eyes.

It would lead me too far — and perhaps where the good-nature of my reader might not follow me — were I to speak more of that happy evening. It is enough to say, that Father Loftus won every moment on my father, who also was delighted with the hearty raciness

of honest Paul. Their stores of pleasantries and fun — so new to him — were poured forth with profusion; and a party, every member of which were more disposed to like each other, and be pleased, never met together.

I myself, however, was not without my feeling of impatience to reach the drawing-room, which I took the first favourable opportunity of effecting; only then perceiving that O'Grady had anticipated me, having stolen away some time before.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Conclusion.

It would be even more wearisome to my reader, than the fact was worrying to myself, were I to recount the steps by which my father communicated to Lady Charlotte the intended marriages, and finally obtained her consent to both. Fortunately, for some time previous she had been getting tired of Paris, and was soon brought to suppose that these little family arrangements were as much "got up" to afford her an agreeable surprise, and a healthful stimulant to her weak nerves, as for any other cause whatever. With Mrs. Rooney, on the other hand, there was considerable difficulty. The holy alliance she had contracted with the sovereigns, had suggested so much of grandeur to her expectations, that she dreamed of nothing but archdukes and counts of the empire; and was at first quite inexorable at the bare idea of the "*mésalliance*" that awaited her ward. A chance decided what resisted every species of argument. Corny Delany, who had been sent with a note to Mr. Rooney, happened to be waiting in the hall while Mrs. Rooney passed out to her carriage, escorted by the "Tartar" of whom we have already made mention. Mrs. Rooney was communicating her orders to her bearded attendant, by a code of signals on her fingers, when Corny, who watched the proceeding with increasing impatience, exclaimed —

"Arrah, can't you tell the man what you want! Sure, though you have him dressed like a wild baste, he doesn't forget English."

"It is a Tartar!" said Mrs. Rooney with a contemptuous sneer at Corny, and a forbidding wave of her hand ordaining silence.

"A Tarter! Oh, blessed Timothy, there's a name for one that comes of dacent people. He's a county Carlow man, and well known he is in the same parts. Many a writ he served — eh, Tim?"

"Tim!" said Mrs. Rooney in horror, as she beheld her wild-looking friend grin from ear to ear with a most fearful significance of what he heard.

"It wasn't my fault, Ma'am, at all," said the Tartar with a very Dublin accent in the words — "it was the master made me."

What further explanation Tim might have afforded, it is difficult to say, for Mrs. Rooney's nerves had received too severe and too sudden a shock. A horrible fear lest all the kingly and royal personages by whom she had been for some weeks surrounded might only turn out to be Carlow men, or something as unsubstantial, beset her — a dreadful unbelief of every thing and every body seized upon her, and, quite overcome, she fainted. O'Grady, who happened to come up at the instant, learned the whole secret at once, and with his wonted readiness resolved to profit by it. Mrs. Paul returned to the drawing-room, and ere half an hour was fully persuaded that as General Hinton was about to return to Ireland as commander of the forces,

the alliance was, on the whole, not so deplorable as she had feared.

To reconcile so many conflicting interests, to conciliate so many totally opposite characters, was a work I should completely have failed in without O'Grady's assistance. He, however, entered upon it *con amore*; and under his auspices, not only did Lady Charlotte receive the visits of Father Tom Loftus, but Mr. Paul became actually a favourite with my cousin Julia; and finally, the grand catastrophe of the drama was accomplished, and my lady mother proceeded in all state to wait on Mrs. Rooney herself, who, whatever her previous pretensions, was so awed by the condescension of her ladyship's manner, that she actually struck her colours at the first broadside.

Weddings are stupid things in reality, but on paper they are detestable. Not even the *Morning Post* can give them a touch of interest. I shall not, then, trouble my reader with any narrative of white satin and orange-flowers, bouquets, breakfasts, and Bishop Luscombe; neither shall I entertain him with the article in the French *Feuilleton*, as to which of the two brides was the more strictly beautiful, and which more lovely.

Having introduced my reader to certain acquaintances — some of them rather equivocal ones, I confess — I ought perhaps to add a word of their future fortunes.

Mr. Ulick Burke escaped to America, where, by the exercise of his abilities and natural sharpness, he

accumulated a large fortune; and, distinguished by his anti-English prejudices, became a leading member of Congress.

Of Lord Dudley de Vere I only know that he has lived long enough, if not to benefit by experience, to take advantage of Lord Brougham's change in the law of imprisonment for debt. I saw his name in a late number of *The Times*, with a debt of some fifteen thousand annexed to it, against which his available property was eleven pounds odd shillings.

Father Loftus sleeps in Murranakilty. No stone marks his resting-place: but not a peasant's foot, for many a mile round, has not pressed the little path-way that leads to his grave, to offer up a prayer for a good man, and a friend to the poor.

Tipperary Joe is to be met on the Kilkenny road. His old red coat, now nearly russet colour, is torn and ragged; the top-boots have given place to bare legs, as well tanned as their predecessors: but his merry voice and cheerful "Tallyho!" are still as rich as of yore, and his heart, poor fellow! as light as ever it was.

Corny Delany is the amiable proprietor of a hotel in the neighbourhood of Castlebar, where his habitual courtesy and amenity are as conspicuous as of yore. He has requested me to take this opportunity of recommending his establishment to the "Haythens and Turks" that yearly perform tours in his vicinity.

The Rooneys live, and are as hospitable as ever. I dare not venture to give their address, lest you should take advantage of the information.

O'Grady and his wife are now at Malta.

Jack Hinton and his are, as they have every right to be —

Your very grateful and obedient Servants.

ENVOY.

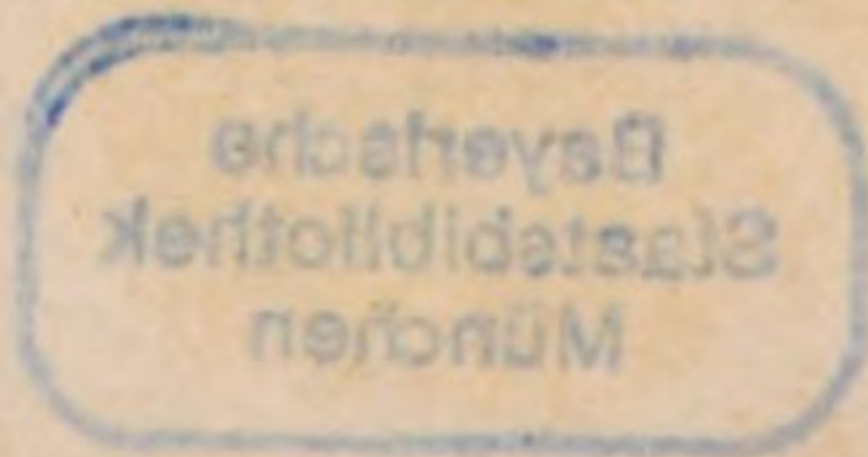
MY DEAR FRIENDS —

You must often have witnessed in the half-hour which preludes departure from a dinner-party, the species of quiet bustle leave-taking produces. The low-voiced announcement of Mr. Somebody's carriage — the whispered good-night, the bow, the slide, the half-pressed finger, and he is gone. Another and another succeed him, and the few who linger on turn ever towards the opening door, and while they affect to seem at ease, are cursing their coachman and wondering at the delay.

The position of the host on such an occasion, is precisely that of the author at the close of a volume: the same doubts are his, whether the entertainment he has provided, has pleased his guests; whether the persons he has introduced to each other are mutually

satisfied; — and, finally, the same solitude which visits him who “treads alone some banquet-hall deserted,” settles down upon the weary writer, who watches one by one the spirits he has conjured up depart for ever; and, worse still, sees the tie snapped that for so long a period has bound him to his readers, and while they have turned to other and newer sources of amusement, he is left to brood over the time when they walked together, and his voice was heard amongst them.

Like all who look back, he sees how much better he could have done, were he again to live over the past. He regrets many an opportunity of interesting you lost for ever — many an occasion to amuse which may never occur again. It is thus that somehow — insensibly, I believe — a kind of sadness creeps over one at the end of a volume: misgivings as to success, mingle with sorrows for the loss of our accustomed studies; and, altogether, the author is little to be envied, who, having enjoyed your sympathy and good wishes for twelve months, finds himself at last at the close of the year — at the limit of your kindness, and obliged to say “Good-bye!” even though it condemns him to solitude.



I did wish, before parting with you at this season, to justify myself before you, for certain things which my critics have laid to my charge; but, on second thoughts, I have deemed it better to say nothing, lest, by my defence against manslaughter, a new indictment should be framed, and convict me of murder.

Such is the simple truth. The faults — the very great faults of my book I am as well aware of, as I feel myself unable to correct them. But, in justice to my monitors, I must say, that they have less often taken me up when tripping, than when I stood erect upon good and firm ground. Yet, let me be grateful for all their kindness, which, for critics, is certainly long-lived, and that I may still continue for a season to enjoy their countenance and yours, is, the most sincere desire of

Your very devoted servant,

HARRY LORREQUER.

P.S. — A bashful friend desires an introduction to you. May I present "Tom Burke, of ours."

H. L.

THE END.

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Lever, Charles James

Jack Hinton, the guardsman

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